

*Mr Charnock*  
*his Discourses*

---

*viz*  
*Man's enmity to God*  
*of the Salvation of sinners*  
Mr. CHARNOCK's

**Two Discourses :**

V I Z.

*Of Man's Enmity to God ;*

A N D

*Of the Salvation of Sinners.*

---



Two Discourses:

1. The Duty of the Christian

AND

Of the Substance of Sinners

T W O  
DISCOURSES:

The FIRST,  
*Of Man's Enmity to God,*  
FROM

ROM. viii. 7. *Because the carnal mind  
is enmity against God: for it is not  
subject to the law of God, neither in-  
deed can be.*

The SECOND,  
*Of the Salvation of Sinners,*  
FROM

1 TIM. i. 15. *This is a faithful say-  
ing, and worthy of all acceptance, That  
Christ Jesus came into the World to  
save sinners; of whom I am chief.*

---

By the late Learned Divine  
STEPHEN CHARNOCK, B.D.

---

Publish'd from his Original Manuscripts  
by Mr. Edward Veel.

---

LONDON: Printed for Tho. Cockerill,  
at the Three Legs and Bible in the Poultry,  
over-against Grocers-Hall, 1699.



**A N**  
**Advertisement**  
**TO THE**  
**READER**

UPON the Publication of  
the Second Volume of  
Mr. CHARNOCK'S Works,  
it was much lamented by those that  
knew him, and had a just value for  
him, that some Sermons he was known  
to have preached (and which were as  
worthy of the publick View as the rest,  
and no less useful to the grand design

of



## An Advertisement

of mans Salvation) could not be found among his Papers; especially three Sermons which many heard him preach on Three several Lord's-days, upon 1 Tim. 11. 15. Christ Jesus came into the World to save sinners. But now, beyond expectation, instead of them, the good Providence of God hath brought to light the Two following Treatises, by the unwearied Diligence of Mr. Ashton, one of the laborious Transcribers of the First Volume of this Author's Works; and who, to give him his due, hath rak'd them out of the Ashes, and rescued them from that oblivion to which they seemed condemned; having with great Pains and Patience transcribed, as well as with great Judgment joined together the several Materials he found belonging respectively to each Subject, in the

to the Reader.

the many loose Papers of Mr. Charnock he had by him. The Papers I have seen, and with Mr. Ashton's help, have (so far as was needful) compared the Transcription with them.

One of these Treatises contains the Continuation of the Author's Meditations on 1 Tim. 1. 15. And herein he handles a second Doctrine, grounded on the last Clause of the Verse. The Text was fruitful, and bore twins; whereof the younger only survives; the other, I fear, is dead without recovery.

But I verily persuade my self, that many an honest Soul will have occasion to bless the Lord for the Birth, (shall I say?) or the Resurrection of this still-born Offspring of so worthy a Father, being thereby stirr'd up  
not

An Advertisement

not only to admire that rich Grace of God which so eminently appears in many times calling the Chiefest of Sinners, but encouraged in the Faith of it, and supported under the burden of the greatest guilt which we find so often oppressing, terrifying, and even sinking awaken'd Sinners into despair, when they look upon their Sins as not only above the Sins of others, but even above the Mercy of God it self, and therefore unpardonable. If secure Sinners shall dare to abuse the great Truths here declared and set forth, to the strengthening their hands in their evil Works and emboldening themselves to a life of Sin, because God's Grace abounds, at their peril be it, and let them answer for it. But in the mean time it is pity that such rich and precious Cordials should be withheld

to the Reader. A

held from those that need them, lest others to whom they do not belong should presumptuously catch at them and undo themselves by misapplying them. And who knows not, that what is a Cordial to some, may prove Poison to others?

As for the other Discourse, Of Man's Enmity against God, we cannot find when or where it was preached. I have been credibly informed, that the Author had a design (had it pleased God to have prolonged his days) to have preached largely about Original Sin, and then it is not unlikely that he might intend this present Treatise as one branch of it. And in it, if the Reader can but dispense with one degree less of that accuracy and neatness of stile which usually appears in his other Writings, he will find



## An Advertisement

find as excellent Matter, and great things as in most of them, and indeed the true Spirit of the Author. He had made great use of the Hammer in beating out the Truth, but wanted time to apply the File for the more thorough smoothing and polishing of his Work, which truly wants nothing but the finishing-stroke. The Thread of this Discourse is as finely spun as of any, tho' the Piece be not altogether so glossy. But whatever is wanting in Ornament, is abundantly made up in Usefulness. And if one of these Treatises may be a Glass in which humbled Sinners may see the beauty and glory of Sovereign Grace, the other too may be a Glass in which the best of Saints may see the Face of their own Souls, and a lively Representation of that inherent Wickedness, which

to the Reader. A

which all that diligently observe and know their own hearts, cannot but acknowledge to be natural to them, as having been born with them into the World. I cannot but say that this Discourse is an excellent Pourtraiture of the Old Man; a Graphical description of the Devils Image impress'd upon, and deforming the most beautiful part of this lower Creation. It shews how much Man is debased and degraded by Sin, and become a Slave to his Lusts, who was made at first to be the Lord of his Fellow-Creatures; and so how rueful a Legacy our first Father hath left us, and to what misery he hath intail'd us, by communicating so cursed a Nature to us. That the blessing of God may be upon these Labours of his (long since) deceased, but faithful Servant; and  
that

## An Advertisement, &c.

that they may, by the power of his  
Grace, be made effectual for obtain-  
ing the Ends designed by the Author  
is the desire and prayer of him who  
is, Good Reader,

Thy Soul's Well-wisher, and

Servant for Jesus sake,

Septemb. 10,

1699.

Edm. Veel.

## Man's Enmity to God.

R O M. 8. 7.

*Because the carnal mind is enmity against God : for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*

**I**N the 4th Verse the Apostle renews the description of those Persons to whom he had proclaim'd a Jubile in the 1st Verse, *There is now no condemnation, &c.* Sanctifi'd Persons only have an interest in Christ; and those that have an interest in Christ, are not subject to a sentence of death. They are describ'd from their Course and Conversation; *They walk not after the flesh*: Not after the dictates, wills, desires, importunities of the Flesh, but according to the motions, dictates, direction



reception of the Holy Ghost in the Gospel.

The note by which we may know, whether we walk after the Spirit, is laid down, *v. 5. They that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the spirit, the things of the spirit.*

*Φρονεῖν* signifies,

1. *Affectum*, Affection. *Rom. 12. 16. Τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖντες.*

2. *Sensum*, Sense or relish. The Understanding is the palate of the Soul, the taster to the Will; it considers what things be good, and under that notion offers them to the Will. Spiritual things are as dry Chips to a carnal heart, even as carnal things are contemptible to a spiritual mind.

3. *Cogitationem*, Thought. So for the most part it is taken, and notes the *τὸ ὑψηλὸν*, and is meant of the higher Acts of the Soul.

Frequent Thoughts discover rooted Affections.

Operations of the mind are the Indexes, *Κεῖθλια* of a regenerate or unregenerate Estate. If about Carnal, they

they evidence the bent of the heart to be turn'd that way, and that worldly Objects are dearest to them. If about Spiritual, they manifest Spiritual Objects to be the most grateful to the Soul.

Carnal thoughts are signs of a languishing and feeble frame; but Spiritual discover a well-temper'd and complexion'd Soul.

As this is laid down by the Apostle, it hath, as some Pictures, a double aspect.

'Tis a Character, and a Duty. For v. 6. The Apostle enforceth it by the consideration of the danger of the one, and the happiness of the other. *To be carnally minded is death, to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

Death and Life,

1. *Effectivè*, by way of Efficiency. As they deaden and enliven the Soul. Carnal Principles are Spiritual Diseases. Spiritual Thoughts are healing Restoratives.

2. *Consecutivè*, by way of Consequence. Revenge and Justice attends the one, as Grace and Mercy accompanies the other.

## Man's Enmity to God.

The proof of this is, *v. 7.* 'Tis death, because it is enmity to, and aversion from God, who is the fountain of life.

'Tis the description of a Natural Estate, and what relation a man consider'd in his Corrupt Nature bears to God.

*Φρόνημα.* The most refined and elevated Thoughts, which have no other ground-work than Nature. The highest flights of an unregenerate Soul by the Feathers of the greatest Reason. The Wisdom and Virtues of the Heathen were enmity: Therefore translated by some, *Sapientia Carnis*, the wisdom of the flesh.

*Τῆς σαρκὸς.* Unregenerate man. Flesh is usually taken in Scripture for the unregenerate part of the Soul. *John 3. 6.* *That which is born of the flesh, is flesh.*

*Ἐχθρὰ.* Not Enemy, but Enmity.

1. Not *Anger*. That is not so bad. It may arise from some distaste; Every disgust snaps not Friendship in pieces.

2. Not *Aversion*. That may be quickly remov'd. But,

3. *En-*

## Man's Enmity to God.

5

3. *Enmity.* How directly opposite is Man to God? God is said to be Love, and Man Enmity, both in the abstract. Like that in *Ezek. 44. 6* *Thou shalt say to the rebellion,* מרד Rebellion instead of *Rebellious.* Enmity in Nature; the Nature of God, and that of a corrupt Man, can never be reconciled.

In the Verse observe,

1. *A Proposition.* The carnal mind, &c.

2. *The Proof.*

1. *Proposition.* 1. *The state, Enmity.*

2. *The Object of this Enmity, God.* 3. *The subject or seat of it, Mind.* 4. *The qualification, Carnal.*

2. *The Proof.* 'Tis not subject, &c. wherein observe,

1. *Wilfulness.* 'Tis not subject. The holiness of the Law, like the light of the Sun, dazels its eyes, that he cannot endure it. If we be not God's Subjects, we must be his Enemies: For he that is not with Christ, is against him.

2. *Weakness.* Neither indeed can be. It cannot, *Quia non vult*, because it will not, saith *Haymo.* 'Tis an enemy to it;



and therefore will not be subject to its determinations.

1. 1. It cannot be *perfectly subject*. It may be subject to the material part, and outward bark, not to the spiritual and true intendment of the Law.
2. It cannot, *quà talis*, as such. Sin cannot be reconcil'd to God, neither can a Sinner, as a Sinner. It must be some superior Power that must conquer an Enemy that hath possession of a strong Fort.

Doctr. 1. *A state of Nature is a state of Enmity against God.*

2. 2. *Man is naturally an Enemy to the Sovereignty and Dominion of God. Not subject to the Law of God.*

By Law, I mean not here the Moral Law only, but the whole Will and Rule of God, which is chiefly discover'd in his Law.

For the first.

D. 1. *A state of Nature is a state of Enmity against God.*

1. For

1. For the Explication. 2. The Confirmation. 3. The Application.

1. What is meant by a Natural Man, or state of Nature?

1. By a state of Nature is *not* meant the Human Nature, or Man as a Creature consisting of Body and Soul: Then Jesus Christ, who truly and really assum'd the Human Nature, was an Enemy to God, as well as we.

1.

Therefore some that understand those Scriptures which speak of the Flesh hindring us, of the natural or fleshly Body, are much mistaken: For if the Flesh as created, and not as corrupted, did impose a necessity upon us of sinning, it would necessarily follow, that God did first place in us a natural enmity, and so is the Author of all our Sin.

And also that Christ could not be free from this black Character, if it be owned (as it must be) that he had a Nature of the same kind and mould as ours are.

God did not in Creation implant in us a Principle of contrariety to him; neither could a God of infinite Goodness dash any such blot upon Man's Nature, for he fram'd him in an exact harmony to his own Will, and printed him a fair Copy without any Errata's, according to his own Image, which is nothing but Holiness and Love.

But our defection from God puts us into this State, which is maintain'd by our inherent and tumultuous Lusts.

In our Creation there was an union to God; in our Corruption a separation from Him, whence ariseth an opposition to him; so that it is not created, but corrupted Nature which is here meant.

2. *Every Prophane Man is a Natural Man, and consequently an Enemy.*

Wicked Works are *demonstrative*, demonstratively denials of God. *Tit. 1. 16. In works they deny him. Sensual, and having not the spirit*, are put together, *Jude 19.* That man that is actuated by sensuality, is not acted by the Holy, but by the Diabolical Spirit.

Luxurious

Luxurious Persons, that make their Belly their God, are term'd Enemies to the Cross of Christ, *Phil. 3. 18.* And if Enemies to the Cross of Christ, then Enemies to God, who was engaged in the greatest Design that ever was upon the Stage of Heaven and Earth, at the time of Christ's being upon the Cross. And if Enemies to the Cross of Christ, then Enemies to all those Attributes of Wisdom, Power, Holiness, Truth, Justice, Mercy, which God glorified in the Death of Christ, and in the most illustrious manner.

3. Every *unrenew'd man*, though never so richly endowed with morals, is a *Natural Man*.

3.

What is call'd *φρόνημα σαρκός* in the Text, is called, *1 Cor. 2. 14.* *ψυχὴ ἀνθρώπου*, one that hath nothing excellent but a rational Soul.

As *ψυχὴ* is oppos'd to *πνεῦματις*, it is a Soul jointur'd in the richest Dowry of Nature.

And as oppos'd to *σαρκίς*, a fleshly Man, it notes a freedom from gross pollutions and defilements without.

A



## Man's Enmity to God.

A *λογικός άνθρωπος*, is one led by the Rational Dictates of his Mind, and *σώφρωνος* is a man led by his Sensitive Affections.

Though the one be better than the other, and more agreeable to the order of Nature, yet both being corrupted and defiled, are contrary to God.

Suppose a Man with the highest Endowments of Reason, Wisdom, Understanding, Learning, as wise as *Solomon*, and suppose him as rich in Morals as in Intellectuals; yet if he be not *renewed in the spirit of his mind*, *Rom. 12. 2. i. e.* the more spiritual and rational part of his Soul, though there be never so fair a frontispiece, colour, and pretences of friendship, yet such a Man is an Enemy; because by all that strength of Nature he cannot have a knowledge of spiritual things, or a faith in God; and without a knowledge of him, he cannot be subject to him; and without faith it is impossible to do any thing to please him.

The civillest Heathens, who disdain'd those ugly and carnal Sins of Drunkenness, Lust, &c. yet were possessed by the

## *Man's Enmity to God.*

11

the more spiritual Legions of Pride and Vain-glory, &c. Though you have not outwardly the filthiness of the Flesh, yet you may flow with a greater filthiness of the Spirit.

External Acts of pollution are more abhorred by Reason, because they are more brutish, they degrade the Nature of a Man, and disgrace his Person. But in Heart-sins, though there be not so much of discredit, there is more of enmity.

### *2. What kind of Enmity this is.*

2.

#### *1. I understand it of Nature, not of Actions only.*

1.

Every ACTION of a Natural Man is an Enemy's ACTION, but not an ACTION of Enmity. A Toad doth not envenome every spire of Grass it crawls upon, nor poison every thing it toucheth, but its Nature is poisonous.

Certainly every man's Nature is worse than his ACTIONS: As Waters are purest at the Fountain, and poison most pernicious in the Mass, so is Enmity in the heart.

And

And as Waters relish of the Mineral-Vein they run through, so the Actions of a Wicked man are tinged with the enmity they spring from, but the mass and strength of this is lodg'd in his Nature.

There is in all our Natures such a devilish contrariety to God, that if God should leave a man to the current of his own heart, it would overflow in all kind of wickedness: For the best meer Nature hath fundamentally and radically as much of this enmity, as the worst: For the disposition is the same, though the effects may be restrain'd in some men more than in others.

No man is any more born with a love to God, than he is with the knowledge of the highest Sciences. There is indeed an active power to the attainment of those by the assistance of a good Education; but man hath only a passive power to the other, as being a Subject passively capable of the Grace of God.

The inherency of this enmity in our Nature the *Psalmist* expresseth, when he tells us, *Psal. 58. 3, 4. The wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon*

soon as ever they be born. They go sinfully, before they go naturally. Their poison is like the poison of a Serpent, which you know is radically the same in all of the same Species.

2. 'Tis a *state of Enmity*.

Godly men may do an Enemy's Action, but they are not in a state of enmity. They may be cheated into sin, but they do not dwell in it; they may fall into it as a man into a Ditch, but they lie not in it.

There may be some jarrings between God and a regenerate Man; God may be displeased with him, and he disgusted with God, and jealous of him, as in the Case of *Jonah*, a Type of Christ; but there is not a stated War.

But a Natural man is in a state of universal contrariety.

1. *All times*, its rooted in the Nature of a man. 'Tis call'd a *root of bitterness* planted in a man's disposition: Therefore bitterness is a quality essential to it, and inseparable from it: For while it remains a Root, it will remain bitter.

You



You can never suppose a thing to exist, and be without its Nature, and the Modes and Qualities due to such a Being; or a man to live, and be without a Soul.

So you cannot suppose a corrupted Creature to be one moment of time without this enmity, no more than a Serpent can be imagin'd to retain its Nature without the Venome inherent in it, though there is not at all times the discovery of it.

2.

2. *In every sinful Act.*

Though the interest of particular Sins may be contrary to one another, yet they all conspire in a joint League against God.

Seneca.

*Scelera dissident.* Sins snarl at one another; Covetousness and Prodigality, Covetousness and Intemperance cannot agree, but they are all in an amicable combination against the Interest of God.

\* Jenkin  
Jude, Part  
2, p. 522.

\* In betraying Christ *Judas* was acted by Covetousness, the High Priest by Envy, *Pilate* by Popularity, but all shook hands together in the murdering

ing of Christ. And those various Iniquities were blended together, to make up one lump of Enmity. Though in every Sin there is not an express hatred of God, yet there is *Odium Dei participativè*, some participation of hatred of him.

As all virtuous Actions partake of the nature of love to the chiefest good, our beloved Object; so all vicious Actions, which are at a distance from the chief end, are marshall'd by, and tinctur'd with that inward enmity which lurks in the Soul.

3. Objectively universal against all the Attributes of God.

3.

For Sin being an opposition to the Law of God, is consequently a contrariety to his Will, and his Understanding, and therefore to all those Attributes which flow from his Will, as Goodness, Righteousness, Truth; and his Understanding, as Wisdom, Knowledge.

Though every Law proceeds from the Will of the Lawgiver, and doth formally consist in *actu voluntatis*, yet it

it doth presuppose *actum intellectus*, i.e. Though it doth consist in the Will of the Law-giver, yet it presupposeth the Wisdom of the Law-giver to be the Fountain. As the Understanding of God doth precede the Act of his Will, so every Sin being against the Will of God, is also against the Infinite Reason and Wisdom of God, which is the foundation of all his Laws.

3. 3dly. This enmity against God 'tis habitually seated in the mind.

Corruption extends its Empire as large as Regeneration; but this is seated in the mind, and the most spiritual part of it, *Rom. 12. 2. renew'd in the spirit of your mind*; it doth not content it self with the Outworks of the Affections, but triumphs in the chiefeft Fort of the Soul, and there displays its Banners.

The great contest between God and the Devil is in the Understanding and Will. The Standards are first erected there. As in Conversion, the mind is first enlightned by God, and the Will first inclin'd; so in Seduction, they are first possessed by *Satan*.

Hence

Hence a natural man is describ'd to be one that fulfils the *desires of the mind*, as well as of the flesh, *Eph. 2. 3.* In this part, wherein God placed the most splendid part of his Image, doth the Devil diffuse his poison: And Wisdom, the chiefeft Flower in the rational part of Man, is infected with this Plague, for that is *devilish* too, *Jam. 3. 15.*

The mind thus infected, is like those eminent Persons, that spread the contagion of their Vices to all their Attendants.

If it be thus in the noblest and governing part of the Soul, it must be so also in the other Faculties, which are directed by it, and observe the dictates of it.

\* The other Faculties, like common Soldiers in a War, fight for the Prey and Booty; but the Mind, the Sovereign, being fill'd with Principles of a more direct contrariety to God, fights for the superiority, and orders all the motions of the lower Rout.

\* Gurnal's  
Christian  
Armor  
something  
chang'd.

But more particularly, there is,

e

1. *Odium*



- I. 1. *Odium aversionis*, as opposed to desire.

Thus man hates God, because he turns from him.

Man naturally gives his vote for God's absence, and is so far from loving the practice, that his stomach abhors the knowledge of God's ways, *Job 21. 14.* That say unto God, *Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.* That say unto God. No Creature durst be so bold to say it to God's face; but it is the language of our Natures, though not of our Tongues. *We desire not the knowledge of thy ways.* The Laws and ways of God which he commands us to walk in, are too holy, righteous and spiritual for our Corrupted Nature.

By sin we stand indebted to God, and therefore have an aversion from him; as Debtors hate the sight of their Creditors, and are loth to meet them. *Adam* fled from God, when he had run upon God's Score: Sin is a Disease, and so contrary to that Physick which would abate the violence of the Humour.

God's

God's presence and purity is too dazzling a sight for sinful men: And therefore they cannot look upon God, but are like sore Eyes that are distemper'd with the Sun.

2. *Odium Prosecutionis*, which implies a detestation opposite to love and affection. And so there is not only an aversion from God, but an opposition to him.

Both those parts of hatred are describ'd, Col. 1. 21. *And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your minds by wicked works.* Here is,

1. *Alienation*, which is aversion.
2. *Enmity*, which is opposition; and both seated in the mind. Though some expound Alienation according to outward, Enmity according to inward estate.

But the Apostle declares hatred to be compleat in those two, Alienation and Enmity, which is both in Mind and Works; Mind as the Seat, Works as the issues of it. Enemies in disposition and action, principle and execution.

This *Odium persecutionis* is,

- I. 1. *Natural*, which we call Antipathy.

And there are steps of this among many Creatures : Many men have an abhorrence to some kind of Meats, and can never endure the taste, nor the sight ; and if unawares they eat any of that disagreeing sort, it breeds a Distemper in the Body.

Some men have had antipathy at the sight of some Creatures, as *Germanicus*, according to *Plutarch's* relation, could not endure the crowing of a Cock. Another the smell or touch of a Rose.

Antipathies have been observed between some Creatures after they are dead. The Guts of a Lamb and Wolf upon the same Instrument can never be tun'd. The Blood of Dragons and Eagles can never mix together. Some Plants will not grow by one another.

There is not such a hatred absolutely between God and Man, though there be between God and Sin : Because there may be a reconciliation between God and a Sinner, but not between God and Sin : For Antipathies are irreconcilable. The

The enmity between God and a Sinner is not founded in Nature, but Corrupt Nature; and this Nature may be remov'd by satisfaction and regeneration.

A fundamental Reconciliation was the great intendment of God in the death of Christ: For he was in him as in his Ambassador reconciling the World unto himself: And an actual reconciliation is made between God and a particular Soul at the first instant of faith; though this reconciliation be made between God and Man, yet not between God and the Corrupt Nature of Man: For it would be against God's Nature to be reconcil'd to that, though he be his Creature; because since his Nature is infinitely good, he cannot but love goodness, as it is a resemblance of himself, and consequently cannot but abhor unrighteousness, as being most distant from his Nature; and therefore never will express any dearness or intimacy to man's Corrupted Nature, but to man justify'd and regenerate.

But the enmity which is between God and Sin is founded in the Nature



of God, and the Nature of Sin. Sin being the *summum Malum*, the greatest Evil, is naturally most opposite to God, who is the *summum Bonum*, the greatest Good.

So that God can never be reconcil'd to Sin, or Sin to God : For on the one side God must part with his Holiness, or Sin with its Malice and Impurity, and so God cease to be God, or Sin cease to be Sin.

As God is unchangeably good both in Nature and Decree, so Sin is unchangeably Evil. As God can never cease to be good, so Sin can never cease to be Sin ; because the natural imprinted Law of God can never cease to be his Law, because it is grounded upon eternal Principles of Righteousness.

God's Nature is against Sin : For if his hating Sin were a meer voluntary Act, he might then either love it, or detest it, which he pleas'd. But is God unrighteous to love unrighteousness ? No, 'tis a voluntary, natural Act.

The hatred Sin hath to God, hath no mixture of love ; the hatred a man hath to God, may have some mixture of a  
natural

natural love, because of the kindness he knows he receives from God.

2ly. *Acquired hatred*; which is grounded upon diversity of interests. 2.

Various interests must have contrary means for the attainment of their ends.

The interest of a Sinner as such, *quæ talis*, consists in gratifying the importunities of his lusts, in finding out occasions of pleasures; and the interest of God lies in vindicating the Righteousness of his Commands, and maintaining the Truth of his Threatnings.

This is either,

1. *Direct.*

1.

When a Man burns with a desire of revenge against another for some real or supposed affront, endeavouring to do him all the ill offices in his Power.

This none but the despairing and malicious Devils are guilty of, who know themselves to be under an inevitable Sentence.

In this, some place the Sin against the Holy Ghost, and make it to be a direct and malicious hatred of God. But that will be a question, whether a Creature in a possibility, and probability of Salvation, and presuming upon mercy, can maliciously take up Arms against God as God. For as I believe, there is no settled Opinionative Atheism in the World, nor a man ever in any Age, that did deliberately think there was no God, so I believe there is no settled malice against God.

But there may be a malicious contempt of Christ, such as *Julian's* was, who in scorn term'd him the *Gallilean*.

15. Joh. 24. *They have hated me, and my Father also ; me directly, my Father interpretatively or virtually, through many sins. \* As when he saith, those that have seen me, have seen my Father also ; Me plainly, evidently, in my Person and Works ; my Father virtually, as I am his Extraordinary Ambassador in the World, to represent him ; and because they have seen the power of my Father acting in and by me*

me in the Miracles I have wrought. So that they hated the Father as they had seen him; i.e. Not directly, but in his Agent our Saviour. Their hatred of God was as their sight of God had been.

2ly. *Implicite & interpretative.*

2.

*Idem velle & nolle est proprium amicorum.*

Lovers are said to have but one Soul; and therefore but one will.

Men love not the things that God loves, and therefore may be said to hate him. A Man may be said to hate God, as Men are said to wrong their own Souls; and love death, and despise their own Souls, Prov. 8. 36. *He that sins against me, wrongs his own Soul; all they that hate me love death. Pro. 15. 32. He that refuseth instruction, despiseth his own Soul.* Consecutive, as they do those things that will be an injury unto, and bring death upon them. As a Thief may be said in this sense to hate his own Life, because he doth those things which will be the Occasion and meritorious Cause of his destruction.

For



For no Man doth formally love death as death, or despise his own Soul, but in doing those things, the effects whereof are such as a man may be said to contemn himself.

So Men acting those things which juttle with God's Law, and stand diametrically opposite to his Will, are said to hate God.

In this respect, Sin is call'd a contempt of God, not formal and express, but implicit and interpretative, because by Sin the Law of God is contemn'd, and consequently the Authority, Will, and Wisdom of the Law-giver, *1 Sam. 2. 30. They that despise me, shall be lightly esteem'd.*

The nature of Hatred being thus explain'd, let us see what kind of Enmity against God this is.

I. *1. Negatively.*

I. *1. We hate not God as God.*

'Tis not the primary intention of a Creature to set it self against the Nature of God. And indeed, it is impossible: because God absolutely consider'd, hath all the attractives of Love, since the noblest Perfections of the  
Creatures

Creatures are in a more excellent manner united in him as the Original.

As a Man cannot will sin as sin, because it is purely evil; and therefore cannot be the object of the Desire, since his Will is carry'd out to things under the notion of Good: So we cannot hate God as God, because of the amiableness of his Nature; and what we conceive good, cannot be the object of contempt.

No man can hate truth as truth, or good as good; because the one is the Proper Object of his understanding, the other of his Will, though he may hate them both under an apprehension, that they are evil, and inconvenient to him.

\* God in himself, as he is known by an open Vision, cannot be a motive to Enmity, no, not to the Devils themselves, but as they apprehend his Nature destructive of their well-being.

*\* Non potest  
esse moti-  
vum Volun-  
tatis ad o-  
dium.*

Banez iii  
22da. q. 34  
art. 2.

We never yet met with any so monstrously base, as to hate a Creature as a Creature; or Man as Man; not a Toad or a Serpent as a Creature, but as it is venomous.

And

And though *Timon* was surnam'd *μολιχρῶς*, because possess'd with a melancholly kind of hatred; yet he profess'd he hated bad Men, because of their Vices; and good Men, because they did not concur with him in so intense and exact a hatred of the Enormities of the World.

And as it is impossible that we should hate a Creature under the notion of a Creature, because there is nothing in the simple notion of a creature contrary to us, but in regard of some appropriated nature of this or that Creature of a different or contrary stamp to our own; so neither can we hate God as God, because in the general and abstracted notion of God, there is nothing contrary to Man, no nor to corrupted Man, but he is an infinite Mirror of Goodness, and ravishing Loveliness.

2. 2ly. *We hate not God as Creator and Preserver.*

Hatred always supposeth some injury either real or imaginary, or at least the fear of some. And our hatred doth

doth evaporate, when we find him to be good, whom we hated under a conceit of being bad, or when our supposed injuries are recompenced by comforting benefits.

What Servant can disdain his Master for feeding him, or what Child hate his Father for begetting and maintaining him? This is contrary to the common sparks of ingenuity, which are in the natures of Men, and against their natural interest.

Reason will acquaint men with a First Cause; and that their Beings are produced and preserved by a power superior to their own. Who can loath this infinite Sun for the constant refreshment they receive by his beams and influences, any more than a man can hate the created Sun, for the kindly warmth darted upon him?

In this respect natural men from a common ingenuity, have some starts of love to God, though this is not a love of a right impression: because it respects not the Excellency of God's Nature, but the agreeableness of his benefits to us, and so is rather a self-love, as  
terminated



terminated principally in our own welfare, sustain'd and increas'd by the influence of his Providence.

Sometimes this love to God, which a wicked Man thinks himself endued with, is rather an Enmity, when he loves God with an only respect to his own corrupt Ends. As when he professeth an affection to God for his preservation, that he may the longer continue in the society of his darling lusts. Or when he loves God for the wealth he gives him; Because he hath thereby the more materials for his luxury and voluptuousness: This is such an affection to God, which may be term'd an Enmity, since it is subordinate to the love of his brutish lusts. 'Tis a love of him for those mercies which he turns into fuel to support his natural contrariety against God.

2.

2ly. *Positively.*

1.

1. *We hate God as a Sovereign.*

Man cannot endure a superior: He would be uncontrollable.

*Pharaoh's*

Pharaoh's principle, that would acknowledge none above him, but proclaim'd War against Heaven, this dwells naturally in every one, Psal. 12. 4. *Our Lips are our own, who is Lord over us?* Exod. 5. 2. *Who is the Lord, that I should obey his Voice, to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.* How contemptible doth he speak of God, which is the dialect of every man's heart? Who is the Lord, that I should obey his Voice, and let my dearest carnal pleasures go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let them depart from me.

A Desire of being like to God, or equal to him in Wisdom, was the first Sin of Man after the Creation; as to be equal to God in Authority and Power was the first Sin of Devils, a renouncing of God's dominion.

God by a positive Law enjoyn'd Man not to eat of the forbidden Fruit; a thing in it self indifferent, but commanded for the trial of his Obedience, to see whether he would own a Subjection to God's absolute Will, and abstain from things desirable in themselves,

selves, because of the meer pleasure of the Creator. But by his transgression he disown'd God's right of commanding, and his own duty of obeying.

The Devil knows by his own temper, what bait Man was most like to Catch at, since the noblest Creature among the Animals aim most at superiority and victory.

*Nebuchadnezzar*, who was for this aspiring humour to be accounted and worshipped as a Sovereign God, was as deservedly as disgracefully turn'd a grazing among the Beasts.

And the great charge at the last day against the Sons of Men, will be, that they would not have God, or Christ of his appointment, to reign over them.

*We hate God as a Law-giver.* As he is *peccati prohibitor*, *Luk. 19. 27.* 'Tis impossible that man should do otherwise, as considered in the nature wherein he stands, because it is as natural to us to abhor those things which are unsuitable and troublesome, as to please our selves in things agreeable to our minds and humours. But since Man is so deeply in love with sin, accounting it the

the most estimable good, he cannot but hate the Law which checks it, both the external Precept, and the Counterpart of it in his own Conscience, because the strictness of the Commands molest and shackle him in his agreeable Course, and the severity of its threatnings stare him in the face with Curses. As the Sea foams most, and casts up most Filth, when the impetuousness of it is restrain'd by some Rock, or bounded by the Shore.

'Tis not the Law that provokes us to sin directly, but accidentally, because of our Corruption, contrary to the image of God's Purity in the Precept.

For we look upon God as cruel, and injurious to our liberty and well-being, and commanding those things which in our apprehensions do thwart and contradict our pleasures.

This Conceit was the Hammer whereby the hellish *Jael* struck the Nail into our first Parents, which hath convey'd Death and Damnation, together with the same imagination, to all  
D their



their posterity, Gen. 3. 5. *God doth know that in the day you eat thereof, your Eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as Gods, knowing Good and Evil.* Alas poor Soul! God knows what he did, when he forbade you that Fruit, he was jealous you should be too happy, and it was a Cruelty in him to deprive you of a food so pleasant and delicious. 'Twas for this end the Law was given with Thunderings and Lightnings from Mount Sinai, to enforce an awe upon Men; God well knowing, how apt we are to break the Hedges, and fly from Restraints.

Hof. 4. 16.

Mal. 1. 13.

The Sum is, Man would be as a *Lamb in a large place*, like a Heifer sliding from the yoke. He snuffs at the Commands of his Lord, and would be subject to no Law but his own, and be guided by no Will but that of the flesh. Have you not many times wished, that there were no Law, or that it were not so strict as to check your darling lusts? What is this but an Enmity to the authority of that Law you account so burdensome?

2ly. We

ly. *We hate God as a Judge. As*  
*Autor legis, and Ultron legis. As Peccati*  
*Prohibitor, and Pæne Executor.*

2.

Fear is often the cause of hatred. All men have a fear of God, not of offending him, but of being punished by him.

Ουδὲς γὰρ  
 ὁ φοβέσθαι  
 φίλει.

Corruption kindles this Enmity, but Fear like a Bellows enflames it. When men know they deserve punishment, they must needs fear, and consequently disaffect both the Author and Inflicter of it.

Arift.  
 Rhet. lib.  
 2. cap. 4.

Guilt makes Malefactors tremble at the report of a Judge's coming.

All the Perfections of God, though never so amiable, cannot produce any true Spiritual Love in a Natural Man, though he be never so specious in the Eye of the World, or good-natur'd to his fellow-creatures, while he lies under the apprehensions of wrath, and is in his own sense concluded under an eternal doom.

If you should tell a Prisoner, That his Judge is a brave comely gentle Man, of excellent Accomplishments, and unsported Innocency, would this commend the person of the Judge

to the Prisoner? No, because he considers him not in his Intellectual or Moral Endowments, but in his Political Function, as a Judge that will try, and condemn, and take away his Life.

This hatred of God is stronger or weaker according as the Fear is.

And therefore in Hell it's in its Meridian and Maturity, and most proper to the damn'd Spirits.

But not so evident in this World, unless a Man be brought into such a despairing condition as *Spiras* was, who professed he hated God upon this account; Because the acts of God as a Judge are remote, and Evils at a distance do not so much affect us, because we flatter our selves with hopes of escape. 'Tis the certainty and approach of Judgment that inspires Fear.

Evils hurt us not by a single apprehension of their nature: for the contemplation may be delightful, as a picture of a storm at Sea, or a battel at Land; but they affect us as they have relation to us; That which was the Devil's Language to Christ, Mat.

8. 29. *What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come to torment us before the time?* This is the dialect of our hearts, Job 21. 14. *Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways of Holiness, nor thy ways of Justice.*

Well then, Did none of you ever rage against God under his afflicting hand? Were you never like wild Beasts, ready to are in pieces those that would take and tame you?

Did you never wish, that God were so careless, as to enact no Law to hurt you; and so unrighteous, as to have no Justice to punish you? Did you never wish him stript of his Preceptive Will, and his Revenging Arm? Have you not wished sometimes, that the Law might be as dead a letter in respect of Curses, as it is in respect of conveying strength for the performance of it? that it might be a silent Law, like Eli to his Sons, never to correct you?

3ly. When this fear riseth high, or Men are under a sense of punishment, *they hate the very being of God.*

3.



This riseth so high, that it aims at the very Essence of God, as in *Spira's* Case, who wished that he could destroy him.

Since all men are acted by a principle of self-preservation, and that this principle is universally natural, and predominant, it will move them to take away the Life of any Person, rather than lose their own Life by them.

When men look upon God as a Judge and Punisher of their Crimes, if they could by any means, yea by the undeifying of God himself, rescue themselves from those fears, there is self-love enough, and enmity enough against God in them to quicken them to it.

There is no doubt but the damn'd, if they could, would pull God out of his Throne to have ease from those dreadful torments they undergo. And whatsoever fearful apprehensions we have of God in this world, are but the lower degrees of that hatred which the damn'd have in the highest.

But that I may not send you so far as Hell for a proof, I will assert, That the wishing, nay the endeavouring the

the destruction of God, is fundamentally and seminally in every one of our Natures.

I will appeal to your selves; Did none of you ever please your selves sometimes in the thoughts, how happy you should be, how free in your lustful pleasures, if there were no God?

Have you not one time or other wished, there were no Law given above to restrain you, no Conscience within to check you, no Judge hereafter to Sentence you? And can God be hated worse, than when the destruction of his inseparable Perfections, his Holiness, Righteousness, are thought so desirable? It is a wishing the destruction of his Being.

Hatred as defin'd by one, to be *Appetitus amovendi rem aliquem.* As Love is a desire of union, Hatred must be a desire of separation. And Aristotle tells us, That Hatred is an affection of a higher strain than Anger, because it desires the *τὸ μὴ εἶναι*, the very not being of the hated Object.

Scaliger  
Exercit.  
316. S. 1.

As the hatred of Sin aims at the destruction of Sin, and men's hatred of Saints would cause their Expulsion out of the World; so the hatred of God is a desire to despoil him of his Being. And their not doing it, is not for want of an innate disposition, but for want of strength; for Men hate God more than the best Saint doth Sin. All hatred includes a virtual Murder, 1 *Joh.* 3. 15. *Whosoever hates his brother, is a murderer.* If he who hates his Brother is in the Court of exact Judgment a Murderer of his Brother, he that hates God is a Murderer of God.

The more self-love we have, the more we shall hate that which we judge destructive to us; because the more we wish well to our selves, the more we wish ill to that which we imagine contrary to our well-being.

And since we hate those acts of God which flow from the Righteousness of his nature, we consequently rise up to a hatred of God's being; because he could not be God, unless he loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; and he could not testify his love to the  
one,

one, or his loathing the other, but in encouraging Goodness, and witnessing his Anger against Iniquity.

Man would have God at the greatest distance from him; and there is no greater distance from being, than not being, *Job 21. 14.* who say unto God, *Depart from us.* And *Psal. 14. 1.* The Fool hath said in his heart, *No God,* as it is in the Hebrew; I wish there were no God, and this is founded upon sin: for the reason rendred, is, that *they are corrupt, and have done abominable works.*

Hence is Sin by some call'd *Deicidium*, a slaughtering of God: because every sin being Enmity to God, doth virtually include in its nature the destruction of God.

And since every man naturally is a Child of the Devil, and is acted by the Diabolical Spirit, *Eph. 2. 2.* *The spirit that now works in the Children of disobedience;* he must necessarily have that nature which his Father hath, and the infusion of all that venom which the Spirit that acts him, is possessed with, though the full discovery of it may be restrain'd by various Circumstances. And this assertion seems



to be intimated in the death of Christ; for when we see, for the satisfaction of the dishonour done to God, Christ must die for Sin, it intimates, that if it were possible, God should die by Sin. If sin can be expiated by no less than the blood of God, it seems to imply, that in its own nature it aims at no less than the Life of God; because all God's punishments are founded *in lege talionis*, and are highly Equirable.

For confirmation, That a state of Nature is a state of Enmity.

The very design of Christ coming into the World being an errand of peace, and the management of this design both when he was conversant in the World, and since his ascension, being to reconcile God and Man, and to promote by his Spirit an acceptance of this reconciliation, plainly discovers the state Man was in, wherein Man injur'd God, and was punished by him: for what need of piecing up a friendship, if there had not been an antecedent Enmity?

There was a Moral Enmity against God on our parts, which must needs draw a legal Enmity on God's part against us.

But

But the Apostle in *Rom. 5. 10.* declares it ; *If when we are enemies, we were reconcil'd to God.* If when we were enemies, we all of us ; not the best Saint on Earth, nor the most illustrious glorifi'd Saint in Heaven, but had once this black Character of being God's Enemy.

Not a Son of *Adam* but inherited this filthy puddle, and had this hostile disposition boiling up against God.

Every Man naturally is like the Lake of *Sodom*, that no holy motion can flutter over it, but falls down dead, being choak'd by those steams which exhale from the corruption of the heart.

*Rom. 1. 30. Haters of God, Ουνομίαν* signifies to hate a thing as *Hell* ; 'tis deriv'd from *ουζ*, one of the Poetical Rivers of *Hell*, and signifies a more intense and rooted hatred than the expression of the *LXX, Psal. 139. 21. μισήσεις Δεόν.*

The most desperate enemy God hath now in *Hell* of mankind, had not a blacker Soul at his Nativity, than every one of us had at ours.

*Tit. 1.*

*Tit. 1. ult.* The Apostle tells us of some that denied God, though they profess they knew him. They knew him notionally, and denied him practically, yea every Attribute of his, and his very Being. *Deny'd God!*

There are the Characters of a Deity engraven upon every Man by nature, so deeply in Men's Consciences, that it is impossible for all the malice of the Devil to raze it out. But if we make a judgment of Men's hearts by the Counterpart of them in their Lives, and consider Men's Practices, which are the best indexes of their Principles, we shall quickly find by tracing the streams how corrupt the Fountain is.

*Luk. 19. 29.* This Enmity is against the Sovereignty of God.

Men will not have God reign over them: They will not have God for their Governour, nor his Law for their Rule.

Our created Arms cannot reach Heaven, to pull God from his Throne; but there is a radical disposition in Man to do it, had he ability equivalent to his Corruption. For what is the great quarrel

quarrel between God and Man, but this, Whose Will, and whose Authority shall stand?

While we exclude him from being the Lord of our Hearts, we would exclude him from being the Lord of the World; for that unjust principle which doth deprive him of the heart, would deprive him also of the other; to which God hath no greater Right, nor no juster Title than he hath to our heart, over which we will not let him reign.

Sin is therefore call'd *Rebellion*; which is a denial of subjection to him as our Lord; 'tis an act of Disloyalty, a breach of Allegiance. As the *Jews* say of every Judgment upon them, That there is some of the dust of the golden Calf; *i. e.* something of the punishment of their first Idolatry. So we may say, That in every Sin there is a taint of that first Prodigious ambition of our first Parents, which cost them and their posterity so dear, *viz.* That we would be as Gods, we would be God's equals, if not superiors.

The



The Enmity against this Sovereignty is in three things:

1. In the *breach of God's Laws.*
2. In *setting up other Sovereigns.*
3. In *usurping God's Prerogative.*

1. In the *breach of God's Laws.*

That Servant that doth not perform his Master's Command, doth virtually deny his Authority.

If Obedience be a sign of love, Disobedience is an argument of hatred.

Joh. 14. 15. *If you love me, keep my Commandments.* If Obedience to God enobles us with the glorious title of God's Friends, Joh. 15. 14. Disobedience to God must needs expose us to the unworthy Character of his Enemies.

And indeed the breach of God's Laws is not only a discarding his Sovereignty, but a casting dirt upon his other Attributes.

Rom. 7. 12. For if his Command be *holy, just, and good*; if it be the image of God's holiness, the transcript of his Righteousness, and

and the efflux of his Goodness, then in the breach of it all those Attributes are despis'd. The Law is then slighted as it is a Medal of God's Holiness, as it is equitable in its self, and as it is in its goodness design'd for our conveniency and advantage.

Therefore by the Breach of one point of the Law, we contract virtually the guilt of the Contempt of the whole Statute-book of God, *Jam. 2. 10, 11. Whofoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all*; because the Will and Authority of the Lawgiver, which gives the Sanction to it is oppos'd: Also, because that the Authority of the Lawgiver, which is not prevalent with us, to restrain us from the Breach of one Point, would be of as little force with us to restrain us from the Breach of all the rest, when occasion is offer'd; because also the Breach of any one Law declares a want of that Love which is the Sum and Spirit of the whole Law.

This Enmity to God's Law, will appear in these Ten Things.

1. *Unwillingness to know the Law of God, enquire into it, or think of it.*

1.

Men affect an Ignorance of God's Com.

E

Command ; they are loth to inform themselves ; they hate the Light, which would both discover their Spots, and direct their Course.

\* Zech. 7.

11.

\* Rom. 3.

10.

Hence those Expressions, \* *Refusing to hearken, and stopping the ears that we should not hear.* \* *None understands ; there is none that seeks after God ; unwillingness to seek the knowledge of him ; yea, though it be the most advantagious and refreshing to their Soul ; yet they would not hear,* Isa. 28. 12.

When God presses in upon them by inward Motions, or outward Declarations of his Will, they secretly desire God not to trouble them with his Laws, though their hearts bear witness to the Righteousness of them, Isa. 30. 10, 11. *Which say to the Prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things : cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.* Let not the Holy One of Israel trouble us with any of his Laws, but leave us to our sinful Labour. Herein God placed their Rebellion, v. 9. *Rebellious children, that will not hear the law of the Lord.* They would have smoothe things prophesied to them ; they would partake of his Mercy, but would not imitate his Holiness.

And

And when any motion of the Spirit thrusts it self in, to enlighten them; they *exalt themselves against the knowledge of God*, 2 Cor. 10. 5. and resist the Holy Ghost, keep their Hearts barr'd, that he may not have admittance. The word ἀντιπλήτε, *Acts* 7. 51. is emphatical, To fall against; as a Stone or any other ponderous Body falls against that which lies in its way; they would dash in pieces or grind to powder that very motion which is made for their instruction, yes, and the Spirit too which makes it; and that not in a fit of Passion, but from an habitual Enmity always. Whereas a faithful Subject or Servant who loves his Prince or Master, would fain know what his Will is, and what Laws are order'd, that he may observe them.

But when men have a superficial knowledge of God's Laws by Education, or Attendance upon a godly and able Ministry, yet they are loath to retain it, negligent in improving it; they easily let it slip from them, their minds have not delight to employ themselves in *meditating* of it, or to know the spirit of it, which the *Psalmist* fixes as the Character of a Godly Man, *Pf.* 1. 2.      E 2      Men



Men are more generally fond of the Knowledge of any thing, than of God's Will. Do not the most of Men, that are intent upon Knowledge, spend more Time, and engage more serious and affectionate Thoughts in the study of some Science or Trade, than in the Knowledge of God's Will? With what readiness and dexterity will a man discourse about Philosophy, Mathematicks, History, &c. but any discourse of God began in Company, strikes them dead: He is quite at a loss in the Knowledge of Him and his Will, which was the great End of his coming into the World, and the great Concern of his Soul.

But if a man doth desire to know the Law of God, it is many times more out of a curiosity and natural itch to know, than any design to come under the Power of it; therefore many Men that can dispute for the Principles of Religion, are ashamed of the practice, and ashamed to discourse much of the practical part of it; which is a contradictory thing; for can the profession be honourable, if the practice be vile? If the principles be true and good, and worthy to be known, why are they not practised? If the Practice

Etice be disgraceful, why are the Principles which lead to such Practices, professed and studied? Whence can this affected Ignorance of Gods Laws, this careless enquiry into his Will arise, but from an Enmity against it, for fear they should be disturb'd by it in the pursuit of their carnal pleasures? therefore they account the Word of the Lord a reproach to them and their ways, and a trouble to have their Consciences set on work by the Law that galls them, Jer. 6. 10.

2ly. *Unwillingness to be determin'd by any Law of God.* 2.

When Men cannot escape the convincing Knowledge of the Law, but it breaks in upon them as the Morning-light, they set up their Carnal Resolutions against it, Jer. 44. 16. *As for the word which thou hast spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee: And harden their hearts with a stoutness against God, Mal. 3. 13. Refuse to walk in his law, Psal. 78. 10. Though it be a strength to them, yet they will not, Isa. 30. 15. they would rather guide themselves to destruction, than be under God's Conduct to happiness: They would rather be their own Rulers, than*

God's Subjects. Men naturally affect an unbounded Liberty ; would not have the Bridle of a Command to check them, or be hedg'd in by any Law : They think it too slavish a thing to be guided by the will of another : They are well compared to the Wild Ass, that loves to snuff up the Wind at her pleasure in the Wilderness : They will take their own course, rather than come under the guidance of God, *Jer. 2. 24.* Since the Law checks the inward Operations of the Soul, and would keep them from inward as well as outward compliances with Sin ; they therefore account it a heavy Yoke to be so strictly regulated as not to have their secret retirements and dalliances with sin in their thoughts.

*Let not God speak to us, say the Jews, Exod. 20. 19, 20. lest we dye.* One would think it was the Terror of the Thunder-claps wherewith the Law was proclaimed, that made them so unwilling to hear God speak to them. But the Apostle tells us it was the hatred of the Law it self ; *Heb. 12. 20. For they could not endure that which was commanded ;* which Particle, *For,* shews it to be a reason why they desir'd the word should not be spoken to them

them any more. They had a natural unwillingness to be guided by any Statute of God's enacting. Had they been only afraid of those terrible Lightnings, without any aversion to God himself, methinks they should not so suddenly after have preferred a Golden Calf, the similitude of the *Egyptian* Idol, and put the Name of God upon it, and ascribe to it their Deliverance from *Egypt*, which had been wrought, not by a senseless Calf, but an Almighty and outstretched Arm. Therefore in the Charge God brought against them, *Lew. 26. 43.* *Because, even because they despised my judgments, and because their soul abhorred my statutes;* he accuseth them not only of despising his Judgments, but of a rooted abhorrency of them even in their Souls. There is not a Law but the heart of man naturally hath a secret and rooted detestation of.

Hence man is said to make void the Law of God, *Psal. 119. 126.* They have *made void thy law.* To make it of no obligation to them, as if it were an Almanack out of date; which Christ calls a *making the law of none effect*, *Mat. 15. 6.* *ἰνυπάστει;* you have *unlorded* the Law; put it out of Commission; thrown



off all the power and Dominion of it : Which Law God values more than he doth the whole World ; nay, the least tittle of it is so dear to him, that it shall stand, when Heaven and Earth shall fall. And to vindicate the Honour of it, he would have his Son to dye for a Satisfaction for the breach of it. So that if a man could destroy the whole World, it were not so bad as Sin, which is an undoing that which is an act of God's Royalty, a Copy of his Holiness ; whereas the making the World was but an act of his Wisdom and Executive Power ; nay, God would not be so angry at it ; because his Power is by that contemned ; but in this, his Holiness, which is an Attribute he doth particularly delight in.

3. *Violence man offers to those Laws,* which God doth most strictly enjoin , and which he doth most delight in the performance of.

If a man be willing to be determin'd by some Law of God, it's not because it is his Law, but because it doth not run counter to some beloved Lust of his. But when God enjoins any thing which is against the beloved interest of the flesh he flies out in rage against God ; and the  
inter-

interest of his corrupt Affection excites him to a loathing of that which is truly good.

The strictness of the Law, which natural men account their Band and Shackle, is the ground of their Quarrel with God, the reason of their Rage and their Counsel against God and his Christ: *Psal. 2. 3. Let us break their bands, and cast away their cords from us.* All this was, *ver. 1, 2.* for the strictness of his Law; which *Grotius* understands of the Law of *Moses*, and all the Rights of it; but meant certainly of the Evangelical Law of Christ, the Psalm being a Prophecy of him.

If a man be willing to comply with any Law of God, it is as it prohibits some outward Carnal Sins; but the more spiritual the Law, the more averse the Heart. The more spiritual the Law is, the more doth indwelling Sin exercise its Power, and endeavour to encrease our slavery; *Rom. 7. 14. The law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.* The Apostle there intimates, that our Carnality, our Slavery to Sin, the Enmity of our hearts to God, is best discerned by comparing man with the Spirituality of the Law.

The

The *Jews* were much for Sacrifices, and very diligent in them, which were but the Skirts of the Law, and which God did not principally require at their hands; but for Holiness, Mercy, Pity, and other duties most valued by God, they were mere strangers unto them. Men will grant God the Lip, and the Ear, but deny him that which he most calls for, *viz.* the Heart.

The more earnestly Conscience doth at any time urge the Law, the more furiously will the Flesh act against it. *Rom. 7. 8.* But *sin taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence.* Like as the boisterous Waves, which roar most at that Bank or Rock which forbids their progress; or like Wind, which pent within the narrow compass of the Earth, grows more violent.

Had not God commanded some things so strictly, they had not been broken so frequently. God's righteous Laws, which are intended to check our Corruptions, are occasions to enrage them; as the Vapour in a Cloud ends in a tearing Clap of Thunder when it meets with opposition. We shall find our hearts  
most

most averſe from the obſervation of thoſe Laws which are eternal and eſſential to Righteouſneſs, which God could not but command, as he is a righteous Governor; in the obſervance of which we come neareſt to him, and expreſs his Image more illuſtriouſly. As thoſe Laws for an inward and Spiritual Worſhip of God, the loving God with all our Heart and Soul; God cannot in regard of his Holineſs and Righteouſneſs command the contrary to this. Theſe our hearts moſt ſwell at; thoſe our Corruptions ſnarl at moſt; whereas thoſe Laws that are only morally poſitive, or thoſe that are only poſitive, and have no inſinſick Righteouſneſs in them, but depend purely upon the Will of the Lawgiver, and may be changed at pleaſure, (which the other that have an inſinſick Righteouſneſs cannot): ſuch as the Ceremonial part of Worſhip, and the Ceremonial Law among the *Jews*; theſe we can comply better with, than with thoſe Laws which have an eſſential Righteouſneſs in them, and expreſs more in them the Righteouſneſs of God's Nature.

4ly. *Man hates his own Conſcience, when*  
it



*it puts him in mind of the law of God.* Man cannot naturally endure a quick and lively practical thought of God and his Law, and is an Enemy to his own Conscience for putting him in mind of God. This is evidenced by our stifling of Conscience, when it doth dictate any practical conclusions from the Law, and would stamp suitable impressions upon the Soul. As it is an evidence of an Enmity in one Man against another, when he cannot bear his Company, nor endure to hear him speak; so it is an evidence of an Enmity to God, when a Man cannot endure to listen to that which is in himself, and more intimate with him than any Friend he hath, for the wholesome and necessary advice it gives him as God's Viceroy in him.

Which is not an Enmity to Conscience it self, or to its act of self reflection, but to the matter of it as it is God's Viceroy and Representative, and bears the marks of his Authority in it, and presseth the holy Law of God upon the mind and heart.

Because in other cases this self-reflecting act of Conscience is welcome, and is cherished, where it doth not act in a way

way of Sovereignty deriv'd from God, but suitable to natural affections. As suppose a Man hath in a passion struck his Child that caus'd some great mischief to him, his Conscience reflecting upon him afterwards, will be welcome, and shall work some tenderness in him, which it shall not do in the more spiritual concerns of God, but shall rather be loathed by him as a busy-body.

And by such frequent oppositions of Conscience, this Enmity doth so far prevail, that the Sovereignty of Conscience seems to be quite Cashier'd, insomuch that it ceaseth with any efficacy to spur on the Soul to good, or withdraw it from evil; and being overpower'd by sinful habits, its Commands grow weak, and it sits labouring like a Magistrate that cannot stem the tide of ill manners in a Commonwealth; it enjoins as if it had no mind to be observ'd.

'Tis upon this account that Men oftentimes cannot endure to hear any gracious Discourses of God, because they excite unwelcome reflections in their own Consciences; which instead of reforming them, do more distemper them; as the sweetest Perfumes affect a weak Head with Aches.

Now

Now since Men hate their own Consciences for putting them in mind of God's Laws, it is clear that they hate God himself, because Conscience is God's Officer in them: Since they would destroy the Memorials and Prints of God in the Conscience: Since they would destroy God's Commissioner for doing his work, they would destroy God himself. The Apostle therefore calls Disobedience to the Light of Nature, a Contention, *Rom. 2. 8. To them that are contentious, and obey not the truth, ἐξ ἐναντίας*, that act out of Contention: It must be a Contention against Conscience, the Light of Nature, and consequently against God: for the Apostle in that Chapter speaks of Disobedience to the Light of Nature; they obey not the Truth, out of Contention against it, and against God, who hath published that Truth, and had imprinted it on their Souls as a Guide to them: For God hath put into Man a Conscience as his Deputy, to have a Command over him, and to keep up his Prerogative as a Law-giver in him.

And as the disowning the Principles of the Christian Doctrine, after a taste and

and profession, is a crucifying of Christ, *Heb. 6. 6.* Seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame: And a real acting that in Spirit upon his Doctrine, which the Jews did upon his Body; it being an accounting him an Impostor, and disowning all the Excellency of his Person and Offices; and an implicit Assertion, That there is nothing in him worthy their desire; and this Crucifying, *εαυτοῖς*, [It may be in themselves, as well as to themselves] in themselves, the Common Works of Christ upon them, was in effect the killing of his Person: So by the Rule of Proportion, every Sin against Conscience, and blotting out Common Principles, is not only a Contention against God, but an interpretative destroying of him, and putting God to shame, who is the Engraver of those Principles; and that Law of Nature in Man.

5ly. Man sets up another Law in him, in opposition to the Law of God.

A Sinner looks upon God as too severe a Task-master, and his Laws as too hard a Yoke; as though God were cruel and injurious to the liberty of his

Crea-



Creature, and envied Man of well beings and a due pleasure, *Gen. 3.5. God knows, that in the day you eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened.*

It was the Old Charge the Devil brought against God to *Eve*, and the same Impressions he makes still upon the Minds of those Children of Disobedience, in whom he works, and fills them with unjust Reflections upon God.

Man having this conceit wrought in him, will be a Law to himself, and will frame a Rule subservient to his own Ends, *Rom. 7. 23. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind: Which is call'd the law of sin,* and is set up in a Warlike and Authoritative Opposition against the Law of God in the Mind, *νόμος ἀντιεστωμένος*. This Law of Sin is nothing else but the setting up our own corrupt Appetite and Will against God. As corrupt Reason is oppos'd to Gospel, so corrupt Will is oppos'd to Law.

Sin having set up this Law, makes it the Measure and Rule of Righteousness, and measures also the Righteousness of God's Law by this Law of his own framing; nay, measures the Holiness and  
Righ-

Righteousness of God himself by it. This is horrible, to makes God's Law no holier than our own, and to square God's Holiness and Righteousness according to our Conceptions ; as if God's Holiness were to be tried by our Measures, and judged by our Corruption, *Psal. 50. 21. Thou thoughtest I was altogether such a one as thy self.* This Men do when they plead for Sins as little, as venial, as that which is below God to take notice of ; because they themselves think it so, therefore God must think it so too.

Man with a Gyant-like Pride, would climb into the Throne of the Almighty, and establish a Contradiction to the Will of God by making his own Will, and not God's, the Square and Rule of his Actions.

This Principle commenced, and took date in Paradise, when *Adam* would not depend upon the Will of God reveal'd to him, but upon himself, and his own Will, and thereby make himself as God.

This is the hereditary Disease of all his Posterity, to affect an independency, and leave God's directions, to be his own guide.

And this is the great Controversy  
F that

that hath been ever since between God and Man, Whether he or they shall be God; whether his Reason or Truths, or their Reason; his Will, or theirs, be of most force. Just as the dispute was between *Pharoah* and God, who should be God; whether the Great *Jehovah*, or a petty King of *Egypt*.

And what saith the *Psalmist*? they say of their Tongues, *Our Tongues are our own*, who shall controul us? but more truly the language of men's hearts, *Our Wills are our own*, who shall check us?

This is the thing God condemns in the *Jews*, *Isa. 65. 2. A rebellious people, that walk after their own thoughts*: They would set up their own Thoughts above his Precepts, as though their vain Imaginations were a more just and holy Rule than the infinite perfect Will of God. As in *Jer. 18. 12. We will walk after our own devices. We will be a Law to our selves; let God take his way, and we will take ours.*

'Tis not perhaps so hainous an Idolatry to set up a graven Image, a senseless and a senseless Stock or Stone, as for a Man to set up his own sinful corrupt Affe.

Affections, and devote himself to a compliance with them, in opposition to the Righteous Will of God.

6ly. *In being at greater pains and charge to break God's Law, than is necessary to keep it.* 6.

How will Men rack their Heads, study mischief upon their Beds, wear out their time and strength in Contrivances to satisfy some base Lust, which leaves behind it no other recompence but a momentary pleasure, attended at length with unconceivable horror; and cast off that Yoke which is easy, and that Burden which is light, in the keeping whereof there is great reward. *Mic. 6. 7, 8. Wherewith shall I come before the Lord? Will the Lord be pleas'd with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oyl? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression? the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? They in the Prophet would be at the Expence of One thousand of Rams, and Ten thousands of Rivers of Oyl; offer Violence to the Principles of Nature, give the First-born of their Bodies for the Sin of their Souls, rather than to do justice, love mercy, or walk humbly with God; Things more easy*



in the practice than the Offerings they wish'd for.

Thus Men would rather be Sin's Drudges, than God's Freemen; and neglect that Service wherein is perfect Freedom, for that wherein there is intolerable Slavery; They will make a combustion in their Consciences, violate the reason of their Minds, impair the health of their Bodies in contradicting the Laws of God, and prefer a sensual satisfaction with toil here, and eternal ruin hereafter, before the honour of God, the dignity of their Nature, or Happiness, or Peace and Health, which might be preserv'd with a cheaper Expence than they are at to destroy them.

7. 7ly. *In doing that which is just and righteous upon any other consideration, rather than of Obedience to God's Will.*

When Men will indent with God, and obey him so far as may comport with their own Ends. Unless God will degrade himself, to submit to the Conditions of their interest, they will pay him no Duty of Obedience, nor render him a grain of Service.

What is Hypocrisy, a Sin so odious to God, but performing Duties materially

rially good, upon any other consideration, rather than that of God's Sovereignty?

1st. *Out of respect to some humane Consideration.* I.

When Men will practise some Points of Religion, and walk in the track of some Laws of God, not out of Conscience to the Command, but the Agreeableness of it to their Humour, Constitution, or Nature; Out of the sway of a Natural Generosity, the dictate of Carnal Reason, the byass of Secular Interest; not from an holy Affection to God, an ingenuous Sense of his Authority, or voluntary Submission to his Will. As when a man will avoid swilling, not because God forbids it, but because it is attended with bodily Indispositions. Or when a man will give Alms, not with respect to God's Injunction, but to his own Natural Compassion, or to shew his Generosity. This is Obedience to his own Preservation, the Interest of Moral Virtue, not to God.

Though it may look like Virtue, yet when it is done from Custom and Example, without a due regard to our

Sovereign, we may, in the doing it, be rather accounted Apes, than Christians, or indeed Men. This seems to be Obedience in the Act, but Disobedience in the Motive ; for it is not a respect to God, but to our selves : At the best it is but the performance of the material part, without the spiritual Manner, which is most regarded by God.

Besides, if we observe any Law upon the account of its Suitableness to our Natural Sentiments, or Carnal Designs, we shall as readily disobey, when it crosses the Purposes of our Minds, or Desires of the Flesh ; for our Obedience will be changeable, according to the Mutations we find in our own humours.

How can that be entit'led an Affection to God, which is as mutable as the interest of an inconstant Mind?

Gen. 27. 41. *And Esau hated Jacob, because of the blessing wherewith his Father blessed him. And Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my Father are at hand, then will I slay my brother Jacob.* So, many Children that expect at the Death of their Parents great Inheritances, may be very observant of them;  
not

not because they respect God's Commands in it, but because they would not frustrate their hopes by any Disobligement. *Esau* had no regard of God in decreeing his Brother's Death, though he was awed by the Reverence of his Father from a speedy Execution.

He consider'd, perhaps, how justly he might lie under the imputation of hastening Crazy *Isaac's* Death, by depriving him of a beloved Son.

But had the Old man's head been laid, neither the contrary Command of God, nor the nearness of a fraternal Relation, could have dissuaded him from the Act, any more than they did from the Resolution.

Whence it is, that many Men abstain from gross Sins only out of love to their Reputation : They act that Wickedness privately, which if seen or taken notice of by others, would overspread their Faces with blushing and confusion.

He may have his Mind in a Brothel-house, notwithstanding God's Prohibition, but restrain his Body for fear of disgrace. He may commit Murder in his heart, when the fear of Punishment shall tie up his hands.



Has not then our own Credit more power over us than God? And do we not sooner observe the opinion of the World, which frights us, than the Authority of God which commands us?

Is it not a monstrous thing to be swayed by every thing but the right Motive? To let every thing be a Chain to bind us to the doing good, or eschewing evil, rather than God's Law in his Word, or the Natural Law of Reason implanted in us? Or to be moved rather by the Examples of men that are just, or the Customs of the places where we live, than to act in conformity to the righteous Nature of God? How great an evidence is this of our Enmity to God, or at least a great want of Affection!

2. *Out of affection to some base lust, some cursed end.*

The *Pharisees* were devout in long Prayers, not that God might be honour'd, but themselves esteem'd by men. Ambition may be the Spring and Soul of mens Devotions. *Jehu* was order'd to cut off the House of *Ahab*; the service which he undertook was in its self acceptable, but corrupt Nature acted that which Holiness and Righteousness com-

commanded : God appointed it to magnify his Justice, and *Jehu* acted it to satisfy his Revenge or Ambition : He did it to fulfil the Will of his Lust, not the Will of his true Lord. *Jehu* applauds it as Zeal, and God abhors it as Murder, *Hos.* 1. 4. We may show our hatred to God, and provoke him, in doing the thing which he particularly enjoins us.

This is a compliance with the design of some Carnal Lust, more than with the Authority of the Lawgiver. 'Tis a Service not to God for his own sake, but to our selves for our sins sake.

'Tis rather a casting down the Will of God from commanding, to set our own in its place. Nothing more positively commanded both in Natures Law and the Gospel, than to pray, and worship God. Men may observe some Laws, to have the better conveniency to break others. The *Pharisees* were great Observers of this, they pray'd, and to outward apperance devoutly, with a Zeal (if Zeal may be measur'd by length); but to what end? Not that God might be honoured, but themselves esteemed; nay more cursed, to devour Widows Houses; that men might be induced

induced by that appearance of Devotion to make them Executors of their Wills, and Guardians of their Children; Feoffees in trust for their Widows, and so they might get a fat Morsel for themselves.

3.

3. *Out of a slavish Fear.*

In the doing any thing out of this Principle, men are rather Enemies than Friends. 1 Joh. 4. 18. *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment.* If Fear be inconsistent with Love, it must be the property of Hatred. If perfect Love doth cast out Fear, then perfect Fear doth cast out Love, and nourish Enmity. If Fear be a torment, the Effects of it cannot be a pleasure; and the duties flowing from it have a spice of that hatred which is an inseparable Companion of that Passion, and are done rather to appease their Fears, than to pleasure their Creator. Just as *Pharaoh* parted with the *Israelites*, so do some men with some sins, not out of love to God's Law, but for fear of a further Wrath, or because of the smart of present Judgments.

Well then, how can we discharge  
our

our selves from this accusation of Enmity to God, when we will be excited to a performance of good, and abstinence from evil, by any thing of a less Authority, as the presence of a Child, the sentiments of the World, the preservation of our own Reputation, and the fear of Punishment? So that actions materially honest in men, may be rather a fruit of Passion than Reason; and that which we call our Obedience, a product of the Bestial part in us, rather than that of the Man.

8thly. In being *more observant of the Laws of men, than of the Law of God.* The fear of man is a more powerful Curb to retain men in their duty, than the fear of God: For men are restrain'd from breaking human Laws, for fear of the present Penalties annexed to them; but they encourage themselves in the breach of Divine by God's forbearance; whereby they attribute a greater Right of Dominion to man, than they will acknowledge to be in God. They *willingly walk after the commandment of man*, though in case of Idolatry, but like Snails creep after the  
Com- 8. Hof. 5. 12.



Commandment of God, if they move at all.

So they made *the King glad with their lies*, they cheered his heart with their ready obedience to his Command for Idolatry, against the Counsel of God, and Warnings of the Prophets. And they, contrary to the Speech of Christ, fear him that can kill the Body, more than that God who can destroy both Body and Soul; and are scar'd more by the Frowns of men, than the Power of God. 'Tis natural in all Ages. It was

Hierom.  
Vol. i. E-  
pist. 2. p.  
11. B.

*Hierom's Complaint, Timent leges humanas, at non divinas; Quasi majora sint Imperatorum scuta quam Christi, leges timentus, Evangelia contemnimus.*

Without question man is obliged to obey his Creator, without consulting whether his Commands are agreeable to the Institutions of men. For if we obey him because mens Laws enjoin the same, we obey not God but man, human Laws being the chief motive of our Obedience. This is to vilify God's Sovereignty, and lay it under the Hatches of mens Authority, since we thus slight the Duty which in point of  
Right

Right he may demand of us, and pay with ungrateful returns so liberal a Benefactor: For men whose Laws we principally regard, were never the principal Author of our Being; and the instrumental Preservation we have by them, is not without the Providential Influence of that Lord whose Authority we subject to theirs. Why should we readily submit to Human Laws, and stagger at Divine? Why should we depose God from his Right of governing the World, and value mens Laws above our Maker's? Why should we make God's Authority of a less concern to us than that of a Justice of Peace, or a Petty-Constable; as though they were God's Superiors, and Obedience more rightfully due to them, than to him? What a Contempt of God is this? 'Tis to tell God, I will break the Sabbath, swear, revile, revel, were it not for the Curb of National Laws, for all thy Precepts to the contrary.

9thly. In mans unwillingness to have God's Laws observ'd by any. Man would not have God have a Loyal Subject in the world.

9.

What

What is the reason else of the Persecution of those who would be the strictest Observers of God's Injunctions, as if they were the most execrable persons under the Cope of Heaven? What is the reason the Seed of the Serpent hates the Seed of the Woman with as much vehemency as the holy Angels do the most prodigious Villanies? 'Tis ordinary for prophane men to look upon such as would walk before God unto all well pleasing, as strange and abominable Monsters. 1 Pet. 4. 4. *Wherein they think it strange, that you run not with them to the same excess of riot; speaking evil of you. Speaking evil of you; βλασφημῶντες*, railing, libelling the whole Profession, loading them with many opprobrious Epithets: Because they will not be as diffusive in Sensuality as themselves: Because *they run not*, εἰς ἀσωτίας ἀναχθῶν; thus censuring those acts of theirs, which are pleasing to God, at the Bar of Prophaneſs.

'Tis not for any wrong done to them, that they thus hate them, but because they will not injure God, and transgress his Laws so much as themselves do.

How

How clear a discovery is this of mens natural unwillingness to suffer God to have the least grain of Obedience in the world, when they are angry that any bear a Veneration to his Laws, and that others will not run into the same Career, and be in Arms against God as well as they?

Hence it is that the holiest persons have been most persecuted: Among the *Jews*, *Isaiah* sawed to death, *Jeremiah* stoned, *Zacharias* killed at the Altar, *Elias* put to flight. Among the *Christians*, all the Apostles but *John* put to death: The holiest men have been the greatest Sufferers. Among the *Heathen*, *Socrates* condemned to Poison. And the reason is, because they have more honourable thoughts of God, and would maintain the interest of God in the world.

rothly. *In the pleasure we take to see his Laws broken by others.* 10.

Sin is the greatest evil that can happen to God; and there is nothing man doth more care for and gratify himself in, than to see a Creature be-mir'd with it.

And



And indeed, Sin is the very Essence of most of the Mirth in the world. *Job* so well knew it, that he rose every morning to make an Atonement for his Sons, who he knew could not be without many Errata's in their Jollities.

This Indictment the Apostle brings among the rest against the *Gentiles*, *Rom. i. 32.* *Not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.* Do not men often make that the Object of their Laughter, which is the Object of God's Infinite Hatred? Are not other mens Sins the subject of our Sport and Mirth, which should be the subject of our Pity and Sorrow? Pity to the Sinner, and Sorrow for the Sin.

What is this, but an evidence of a rooted hatred of God in our nature, when we please our selves with any dishonour done to him by others?

For it is put among the noble Attributes of Love, *1 Cor. 13. 6.* That it *rejoiceth not in iniquity*; neither its own Iniquity, nor other mens. To rejoice in it then must be an accursed quality belonging to Hatred; yet how many are there in the world, that cannot see others

others dishonour God, without some sort of satisfaction; they are displeased with his Glory, and pleas'd with his Dishonour.

2dly. We are Enemies to God's Sovereignty, *in setting up other Sovereigns in the stead of God.*

2.

If we did dethrone God to set up an Angel, or some virtuous man, it would be a lighter Affront; but to place the basest and filthiest things in his Throne, is intolerable.

What we love better than God, what we sacrifice all our Industry to, what we set our hearts most upon, what we grieve most for, when we miss of our end, we prefer before God.

1st. *Idols.*

1.

Though so palpable Idolatry be not committed by us, yet it was natural to mankind; since we know all Nations were over-run with it, *Josb. 24. 2.* Since the Father of the Faithful was an Idolater before he was a Believer. And his Posterity the *Jews*, who had heard God himself speak to them from Mount Si-

*nai*, were no sooner departed from the foot of the Mountain, but they adore a Golden Calf in his stead; and this sin did run in the blood of all their Posterity; since we find God charging them with it through the whole Old Testament; and was not rooted out till the Seventy Years Captivity in *Babylon*.

And that the naturalness of it to mankind may further appear, consider what Incentives against it the *Jews* had. They had the greatest Appearances of God, particular marks of his Favour, his Judgments and Statutes; which the *Psalmist* (*Psal.* 147. 19, 20.) sets an Emphasis upon, That he had not dealt so with every Nation, no, not with any Nation. They had the visible signs of his Presence, the Pillar of Fire by Night, and the Cloud by Day; they were more particularly under his indulgent Care; he had alter'd the Course of Nature, and wrought Miracles for their Deliverance; rain'd *Manna* from Heaven to spread their Table, carried them in his Bosom; yet those Wretches were throwing down God, to make room for a Calf, made, as I may say, with

with the Gold, which was besmear'd with their Ear-wax, daub'd with an Excrement.

This Idolatry is as absolute a degrading and vilifying of God as Hell it self could invent ; 'Tis a real calling him by the names of all those filthy, loathsome, senseless Creatures, so odious, as Images of him. As if God were no better than a Stone, a piece of carved Brass or Wood, of no greater Excellency than an Image or Puppet : This is a denying of God. *Job* speaking, that he had not kiss'd his hand, or made obeysance to Idols ; for then, saith he, *I should have deni'd the God that is above,* Job 31. 28.

'Tis call'd a *loathing* God, who is the Ezek. 16. Husband of Christians ; a loathing of 45. all his Authority over them.

The giving Adoration to an Image which belongs to God, is a making it equal to him, if not above him ; for by such a Veneration they evidence, that God is no better in their apprehension than the Stock they worship.

The Heathen World is at this day drenched in this kind of Idolatry, and



most part of the Christian World are subject to the Remains of this Pagan Sin: As the Papists, who adore for their Saviour a little Wafer, which perhaps the Mice have bitten, and Flies have cast their Excrements upon.

2. 2ly. *We are Enemies to God's Sovereignty in setting up Self.*

Man imagin'd at first, that by Eating the forbidden Fruit, he should have a knowledge of Good and Evil, as to be independent upon God, and bottom'd upon himself, and his own Will.

This *Self* in us is properly the Old *Adam*, the true Offspring of the first Corrupted Man. This is the great Anti-christ, the great Anti-god in us, which sits in the heart, the Temple of God, and would be ador'd as God, would be the chiefest, as the highest End. This is the great Usurper in the World, for it invades the Right of God; 'tis the most direct compliance, and likeness to the Devil, whose Actions center wholly in malicious Self-will: In this respect I suppose the Devil is call'd *the God of this World*, because he acts so,  
as

as if the World should only serve his Ends.

Self is the Center of many men's Religious Actions ; while God seems to be the Object, Self is the End, *Zech. 7. 5. Did you fast unto me?*

This being the Motive of Hypocrisy, makes it more Idolatry, and so more odious to God ; other Sins subject only the Creature to Self, but this subjects the Soul, and even God himself to corrupt Self. Self-love leads the Van, *2 Tim. 3. 2. Men shall be lovers of their own selves* ; To that black Catalogue he seems to speak of that black Regiment which march behind it, and is concluded with a *form of Godliness*, and denying the power of it ; and a denying the Power of Godliness, is a denying the Sovereignty of God.

The Righteousness a Man would establish in opposition to God, is call'd a man's own ; a Righteousness of his own framing, that hath its Rise only from himself, *Rom. 10. 3. Going about to establish their own Righteousness.*

Sin and Self are all one ; what is call'd a living in Sin in one place, *Rom.*

6. 2. is a *living to Self* in another, 2 Cor. 5. 15. *That they which live, should not live to themselves.* What a man serves, and directs all his projects, and the whole labour of his life to, that is his God and Lord, and that is Self.

All inferior things act for some superior as their immediate End: this Order hath Nature constituted; the lesser Animals are design'd for the greater; the irrational for Man, and Man for something higher and nobler than himself; for all Beings naturally should, in their several Stations, tend to the Service of the first Being. Now to make our selves the end, and all other things to act for our selves, is to make our selves the supreme Being, to deny any superior as the Center to which our Actions should be directed, and usurp God's place, who alone being the supreme Being, can be his own End; For if there were any thing higher and better than God, his own Purity and Goodness would cause him to act for that as more noble and worthy.

I appeal to you, whether you have not sometimes secret Wishes, that you were

were in the place of God; for where there is a slavish Fear of him, there must needs be such Wishes, according to the degrees of Fear; and so you have wished God undeified, that you might be advanced to the Godhead.

This some think to be the Sin of the Devils, affecting an independency on God by a proud Reflection upon their own created Excellency, and at least a delightful Wish, if not an Endeavour to make themselves the ultimate End of all their Actions.

3ly. We are Enemies to God's Sovereignty in setting up the World.

3.

When we place this in our Heart, God's proper Seat and Chair, we deprive God of his Propriety, and do him the greatest wrong, in giving the possession of his Right to another. The Apostle gives Covetousness no better Title than that of Idolatry, *Col. 3. 5.* And the Psalmist puts the Atheist's Cap upon the Oppressor's Head, *Psal. 14. 4.* Who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the Lord. What we make the chief Object of our Desires,



is to us in the place of God. The poor *Indians* made a very natural and rational Consequence, That Gold was the *Spaniards* God, because they hunted so greedily after it. This is an intolerable dethroning of God, to make that which is God's Footstool to climb up into his Throne; To bow down to an Atom, a little Dust and Mud of the World, a drop out of the Ocean; To set that in thy Heart, which God hath made even below thy self, and put under thy feet; And to make that which thou tramplest upon, to tread down the right God hath to thy Heart. Alas! who serves God with that Care, and with that Spirit that he serves the World with?

4.

4ly. We are Enemies to God's Sovereignty in *setting up sensual pleasures*.

Love is a commanding Affection, and gives the Object a power over us; what we chiefly love, we readily obey. Now

3 Tim. 3. 4. Men are said to be φιλήδονοι μάλλον ἢ φιλόθεοι; A Glutton's belly is said to be his God, because his Projects and Affections are devoted to the satisfaction of

of that ; and he lays in not for the Service of God, but a Magazine for Lust. If you preferr'd some honourable thing which might perfect your Natures, as Learning, Wisdom, Moral Virtues ; though this were an indignity to be censur'd by the Judge of all the World, yet it would be more tolerable ; but to consecrate your Heart and Time to a sordid Voluptuousness, and feed it with the Cream of your Strength, this is an inexcusable Contempt, to pay a quick and lively Service to an effeminate Delight, which is only due to the supreme Lord.

Doth not that Man dethrone God, and hate him, that will be under the command of a swinish pleasure ; and make that the supreme End of his Life and Actions, rather than to be under the righteous Government of God ? The greatest Excellency in the World is infinitely below our Creator ; how much more must a bestial Delight be below him which is so exceedingly disgraceful to, and below the Nature of Man ? If we should love all the Creatures in Heaven and Earth above God, it were more  
excu-

excusable than to degrade him in our Affections beneath a brutish Pleasure. Why doth any man court an ignoble Sensuality with the displeasure of God, Hell and Damnation at the end of it, if he did not value it above God, as well as above his own Soul?

The more fordid any thing is that we set up in the place of God, the greater is the despite done to him. *Ezek. 8. 9.* When the Prophet saw the Image of Jealousy at the gate, God tells him there were greater Abominations than that, which are describ'd *v. 10. Creeping things, and abominable beasts, viz. the Egyptian Idols.*

The viler the thing is which possesses our Heart, the greater slight is put upon God, and the greater the Abomination.

5. ly. We are Enemies to God's Sovereignty in *setting up the Devil.*

Every Sin is an Election of the Devil to be our Lord: If Sin had a Voice, it would give its Suffrage for such a Lord as would favour its interest.

As the Spirit dwells in a Godly Man Eph. 2.2,3. to guide him, so doth the Devil in a Natural Man, to direct him to Evil; so that every Sin is an Effect of the Devil's Government: Therefore Sins are call'd his Lusts, which natural Men (who being the Devil's Children, are under his paternal Government) fulfil and do with a resolute Obedience, Joh. 8. 44. *His lusts you will do.*

If we divide Sins into Spiritual and Carnal, which division comprehends all Sin, we shall find that in both; we own the Devil's Authority either in obeying his Commands, or in conforming to his Example. Some are said to be his Lusts *subjective*, as he commits them; others *dispositive*, as he directs them. In Spiritual he is an Actor, in Carnal a Tempter. In Carnal, Men obey his Commands; in Spiritual, they model themselves according to his Pattern: In the one they are his Servants, to do his work; in the other his Children, to partake of his Nature. In the one we acknowledge him as our Master; in the other we own him as our Copy. In both we derogate from God's Sovereignty



raignty over us, whom we are bound to imitate, as well as to obey. Every Sin, in its own nature, is a Communion or Society with *Belial*, a fighting for the Devil against God; 'tis the end of the Act, though it be not the intention of the Agent. Every Sin is the Devil's work, and therefore the choice of it is a preferring his Service before God's. The Sin of *Saul*, though in a small matter, and not in any natural, but positive Command, is equall'd to the Sin of Witchcraft, which, you know, is a Covenanting with the Devil to yield Obedience to him, 1 *Sam.* 15. 23.

What a monstrous Baseness is this, to advance an impure Spirit in the place of infinite Purity; to embrace the great Ring-leader of Rebellion, above the Contriver of our Reconciliation; the only Enemy God hath in the World, who drew all the rest into the Faction against him, before him who is ready to pardon us upon our revolt from his Adversary? To affect that Destroyer above our Preserver and Benefactor: To esteem him as the exactest Pattern, and the greatest Lord, as though he had created

ted us, provided for us, and in mercy watched over us all our days.

What a prodigious Enmity is this, to offend God, to pleasure the Devil, and injure our Creator, to gratify our Adversary. Have we nothing to prefer before him, but the deadliest Enemy that both God and our Souls have in the World? Must we side with our Tormentor against our Preserver? Shall he which will fire us for ever, be valu'd above him, who would wipe all Tears from our Eyes? Oh let us blush, if any spark of ingenuity be left; and let our hatred of God change its Object, and boil up against our selves for our abominable ingratitude.

3ly. *In usurping God's Prerogative, and exacting those observances which belong to God.*

We destroy his Sovereignty in deifying and rewarding Men for things done in opposition to the Law of God, in putting glorious Titles upon the vilest Acts, naming Ambition Generousness; Murder Valour, &c.

1st. *In*

1st. *In challenging Titles and Acts of Worship due only to God.* What Act of Worship is there due to God, but Man hath one time or other challeng'd it as pertaining to him?

*Darius* for Thirty days must have all Petitions put up to him, as though he could supply the Wants of all Creatures, *Dan.* 6. 7, 8, 9

*Alexander* would be worshipped as God; after him *Antiochus*, whom God calls a vile person. The Pope makes up the number in the Preface the Canonists put to his Decrees: *Edictum Domini Dei que nostri.*

In men's equalling themselves to God. The first Man would know as God. *Babel* builders would dwell as God. *Rabins* tell us, that *Eve* was told by the Devil, That if she eat the forbidden Fruit, she should make a World as God. The Pope will sit in the Temple of God, and pardon Sins as God; exalts himself above all that is call'd God, shewing himself that he is God.

2.

2ly. *Usurping God's Prerogative, in lording over the Consciences and Reasons of others.* Whence

Whence else springs the restless desire in some Men, to model all Consciences according to their own Wills, which belongs to a greater Power than Man is capable of?

*Ferdinand's* Speech was eminent, who when by the persuasion of others, with much reluctancy on his part he had passed an Edict against the Protestants, &c. said, "I expected such a thing, when I would take upon me the Prerogative of God to be Lord over men's Consciences.

We usurp God's Prerogative, when we are angry that others are not of our Minds and Judgments; when they will not be blind Servants to our Opinion, in endeavouring to have our own fancies, yea and passions, though never so boisterous and ridiculous, to be a measure to others. When we are pertinacious in any doubtful Opinion, and assume to our selves Infallibility of Judgment, as if our Sentiments were as firm as divine Decrees; What is this, but an exalting our selves above all that is call'd God, to erect an unlimited Power over other men's Reasons and Judgments,



ments, as though it were as infallible as God, and all others differing from us under Blindness and Error.

3. 3ly. Usurping God's Prerogative, in *prescribing Rules of Worship which ought only to be appointed by God.*

In putting out, or leaving in, what they think fit to be the Rule of Worship; in prescribing by humane Laws, what they judge good and right in divine. All the reason under Heaven could not have inform'd us what God was in himself, or what Worship he expected of us, without supernatural Revelation. Therefore, when God hath fixed it, for Men to be making alterations in it, and additions to it, is an intolerable invading of his Right, at least it is an equaling our own fallible Inventions with his infallible Oracles, imperiously to obtrude upon People humane Inventions with as much authority as if they had been sign'd and seal'd in Heaven, and were unquestionably warranted by God himself. The prescribing the manner of Worship, is a part of God's Sovereignty; therefore in the two last Chapters

Chapters of *Exodus*, where the erecting of the Tabernacle is describ'd, those words, *As the Lord commanded*, are seventeen times inserted. And to prescribe any thing which God hath not commanded (though he hath not forbidden it) is such an invasion of his Prerogative, that he hath punish'd it by a remarkable Judgment. When *Nadab* and *Abihu* took strange fire, *i.e.* other fire than what was upon the Altar, wherewith to kindle their Incense, though God had given no Command to the contrary, yet because he had not commanded the Offering with strange Fire, he cut them off by a terrible Judgment. Lev. 10. 1.

And it is to be observ'd, that none are more irreconcilable Enemies to the true Power and Spirit of Godliness, than the Usurpers of this Prerogative of God, the Lord in just Judgment leaving them to the dotages of their own Minds, and the enmity of their Hearts against him, being Successors of the *Pharisees* in their Judicial Blindness, as well as their Usurpations of God's Authority.

4. 4ly. *In subjecting the Truths of God to the Trial of Reason*, or trying God's Oracles at the Tribunal of our shallow Reason. 'Tis a part of God's Sovereignty to be the Interpreter, as well as Maker of his own Laws, as it is a Right inherent in the Legislative Power among Men. So that it is an invasion of his Right to fasten a sense upon his declar'd Will, which doth not naturally flow from the words: for to put any interpretation according to our pleasure upon divine as well as humane Laws, contrary to the true intent, is a virtual Usurpation of this Power; because if Laws may be interpreted according to our humours, the Power of the Law would be more in the Interpreter than in the Legislator. And it is the worse when Men try the Word not by their Reasons, but by their Fancies and Humours, and put Allegories, the Brats of crazy or humorous Fancy, as the genuine meaning of the Word of God.

5. 5ly. *In judging future Events*, as if we had been of God's Privy-Council when

when he first undertook any great Action in the World.

6thly. *In censuring others state.* 'Tis 6.  
an intruding into God's Judicial Authority. Who hath *made me a judge?* was Christ's Plea. Who art thou that judgest another's state, as though thou wert Lord of the heart of thy Brother, and God had given over his jurisdiction over the heart to thee; as though he were to stand or fall to thy Censure? Luk. 12. 14.

2dly. *Enmity to the Holiness of God.* 2.  
This hating his Holiness, is a virtual depriving him of his Being: For if he did not infinitely hate evil, he would not be infinitely good, and consequently would not be God. God can never endure sin, no not to *look upon it*; and to cherish that, which is so contrary to his purity, is a denial of his Holiness. Hab. 1. 13. *Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, thou canst not look on iniquity.*

First, *In sinning under a pretence of Religion.* 1.



Many resolve upon some ways of wickedness, and then rake the Scripture to find out, at least Excuses and Evasions for it, if not a justification for their Crimes. This was the Devil's method to Christ, to bring Scripture for Self-murder. *Saul* resolves not to obey God, but would preserve the Spoils of the *Amalekites*, and then thinks to qualify all, with offering a few Sacrifices; as though God's Holiness would not hate Sin, that had a religious pretext.

Many that have wrung Estates from the tears of Widows, and heart-blood of Orphans, think to wipe off all their oppression by some charitable Legacies at their death.

'Tis abominable to make Charity, the transcript of God's goodness, a covert for Sin; and Religion, which is to bring us near to God, to patronize our Tyranny.

When men will speak wickedly, and  
 Job 13. 7. talk *deceitfully* for God, i. e. will sin for  
 God's glory, and make the honour of  
 his Service a stalking-Horse to the as-  
 front of his Holiness.

2dly. In charging Sin upon God.

2.

Every man naturally is willing to find the inducement to sin in another, rather than in himself. This is an act of hatred, to bespot the Reputation of others by imputing our Crimes to them, and accusing them as the Authors or occasions of our Transgressions. 'Tis an act of fear, which is the companion of hatred; if men can make God a Sinner against his own Law, they blemish his Holiness, they think they are secure from the punishment they did dread.

\* For we fear not man, who is faulty as well as our selves. When men have done all that they can to blot out a sense of a Deity, and see they cannot do it, they will raze out the reverence of it. And if we find a way to lay our Sins at God's door, when he chargeth them upon us, we think then to escape the rigor of his Justice, and that he cannot be unrighteous to punish us for those Crimes which he is guilty of as well as our selves. But it is a foolish consideration; for if we can fancy an unholy God, we have no reason to think him

\* Manton  
on James,  
p. 92.

H 3

a righ-

teous God. That you may see that this very thing which looks so horrible, runs in our blood, take notice of the two first Discourses God had with Man after his Fall, and they will both discover this.

When God examines *Adam* about his Transgression, he excuseth himself by laying it upon God, *Gen. 3. 12. The woman whom thou gavest me to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.* Hadst thou not given me the Woman, I had not been tempted; and had I not been tempted, I had not sinned: And this Sin was committed presently after the Woman was given me, as if thou hadst given me this Woman to be my immediate Tempter; and insus'd such a love in my heart to her, that it could not resist her Allurements. For he seems by the Speech to intimate, that God gave him the Woman on purpose to draw him into sin. The next is *Cain*; some think *Cain* here lays the fault upon God, *Gen. 4. 9. Am I my brother's keeper?* as if he should have said, Art not thou the Keeper and Governor of the World, why didst not thou

thou hinder me from killing my Brother?

*David*, a holy man, follows him in those steps, and charges a Sin of his own contrivance upon the Providence of God; when the news of *Uriah's* death was brought, he wipes his mouth, and saith, *The sword devours one as well as another.* He fastens that solely on the Divine Providence, which was his own wicked contrivance, 2 Sam. 11. 25.

3dly. *In hating the image of God's holiness in others.*

The more holy any man is, and the more active in the severest Duties of Religion, the more is he the Object of the Scoffs of others; and not only barked at by tripling Drunkards on the Ale-bench, but by formal and grave Judges on the Seat of Justice. *David*, though a King, whose Example might have been powerful to have brought them to an outward pretended love to holiness, was spoke against by them that sat in the Gate, and was the Song of the Drunkards, and that when he wept, and chastis'd his Soul with fasting, *Psal. 69. 10, 11, 12.*

H 4

Hence



Hence nothing is so burthensome as the presence of a sober religious Person, because of that image of God's holiness shining in him, which strikes so full upon his Soul, and sets his heart on work in checking and griping reflections.

Exod. 15. Now Holiness being the glory of God,  
 11. the peculiar title of the Deity, and  
 Joh. 17. 11. from him deriv'd upon the Soul, he that mocks this in a Person, derides God himself. He that hates the Picture of a Prince, hates the Prince also, and much more were he in his power. He that hates the Stream, hates the Fountain: He that hates the Beams, hates the Sun. The holiness of a Creature is but a beam from that infinite Sun, a stream from that eternal Fountain. If a mixed and imperfect holiness be more the subject of thy scoffs, than a great deal of sin, surely thou wouldest more roundly scoff at God himself, should he appear in the unblemished and unspotted holiness of his Nature, which infinitely shines in him: For thy hatred would be greater, because thy contrariety is so much more against the perfection of holiness, than where it is with

with a mixture. Where there is a hatred of the purity and perfection of any Creature, there is a greater reflection upon God, who is the Author of that Purity.

4thly. *In having debasing notions of the holy nature of God.* 4.

We invert the Creation contrary to God's order in it ; God made Man according to his own Image, and we make God according to ours. We fashion God like our selves, and fasten our own humours upon him, as the *Lacedemonians* were wont to dress their gods after the fashion of their Cities. *Psal. 40. 21.*

Though men are enemies to the holy Majesty of God, yet they can please themselves well enough with him as represented by that Idea their corrupt minds have fram'd of him. We cannot comprehend God ; if we could, we should be infinite, not finite ; and because we cannot comprehend him, we set up in our fancies strange images of him, and so ungod God in our heart and affections.

1. *This*

1.

I. This is an higher affront to God than we imagine.

*Vulgi opinionis diis applicare prophanum est. Epicurus. De Deo malè sentire quàm Deum esse negare pejus duco.*

'Tis worse to degrade the Nature of God in our conceits, and to make him a vicious God, than if in our thoughts we did quite discard any such Being; for 'tis not so gross a Crime to deny his Being, as to fancy him otherwise than he is; such imaginations strip him of his Perfections, and make him a God of Clouds.

*Plutarch* saith, he should account himself less wrong'd by that man that should deny there ever was such a man as *Plutarch*, than that he should affirm, there was such a man indeed, but he was a cholerick Clown, a decrepit Fellow, a debauch'd Man, and an ignorant Fool.

This was the general Censure of the Heathen, That Superstition was far worse than Atheism, by how much the less evil it was to have no opinion of God, than such as is vile, wicked, derogatory

ty to the pure and holy Nature of the Divine Majesty.

2. *Carnal imaginations of God, as well as corporeal images, are Idolatry.*

2.

'Tis a question, which Idolatry is the greatest, to worship an Image of Wood or Stone, or to entertain monstrous imaginations of God. It provokes a man when we liken him to some inferior Creature, and call him a Dog, or Toad; 'tis not such an affront to a man to call him a Creature of such a low Rank and Classis, as to square and model the Perfections of the great God according to our limited Capacities. We do worse than the Heathen (of whom the Apostle proclaim'd) did in their Images, they likened the glory of God to such Creatures as were of the lowest form in the Creation. We liken God not to corruptible man, but to corrupt man, and worse yet, to the very corruptions of men, and worship a God dressed up according to our own foolish fancies; Rom. 1. 23. *And chang'd the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like*

to



*to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.*

If all those several Conceptions and Ideas men have of God, were uncas'd, and discover'd, what a monstrous thing would God appear to be, according to the modes the imaginative Faculty frames them in?

5. 5thly. *In our unworthy and perfunctory addresses to God.*

Josh. 24.  
19.

When men come into the presence of God with lusts wreaking in their hearts, and leap from sin to duty. God is so holy, that were our Services the most refin'd, and as pure as those of the Angels, yet we could not serve him suitably to his holy Nature : Therefore we deny this holiness, when we come before him without due preparation, as if God did not deserve the purest thoughts in our applications to him ; or as if a blemished and polluted Sacrifice were suitable enough to his Nature.

When we excite not those elevated frames of spirit, which are due to his greatness, and fulness, and think to put him

him off with cheap and spotted Services, we slight the holy Majesty of God, and are guilty of a higher Presumption than is fitting for us in our access to an Earthly Prince.

We worship him not according to the excellent Holiness of his Nature, when we have foolish imaginations creep upon us in the very act of Duty, which makes our Services erroneous, and misguided. When we bring our worldly, carnal, debauch'd thoughts into his presence, worse than the Dogs or dirty Slaves we would blush to be attended by in our Visits of a Great Man. When our hearts are turned from God in any Duty; while we are speaking with our Creator, to be in our hearts conversing with our fordid Sensualities; 'tis as if we should be raking in a Dung-hill when we are talking with a King. We do here but defame his Holiness while we pretend to honour it; and prophane his Name, while we are praying *Hallow'd be thy Name*. It would argue more Modesty, though less Sincerity, to say to our Lusts as *Abraham* to his Servant, *Tarry here, till I go to sacrifice*.  
6thly.

6. 6thly. *In defacing the Image of God in our own souls.*

God in the first draught of Man, conformed him to his own Image ; because we find that in Regeneration this Image is renew'd, *Eph. 4. 24. The new man, which after God, &c. Oeov, is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

He did not take Angels for his Pattern in his first polishing the Soul, but himself. In defacing this Image therefore we cast dirt upon the Holiness of God, which was his Pattern in the framing of us : And rather chuse to be conform'd to Satan, who is God's great Enemy, and to have God's Image wip'd out of us, and the Devil's pictur'd in us. Therefore natural men, that are guilty of gross sins, are called *Devils*, *Joh. 6. 70.* 'Tis spoken of *Judas* : Christ gave it to *Peter* too, *Matth. 16. 23.* And if he give this Title to one of the worst of men, and one of the best of men, it will be no wrong to give it to all men. Men wallow in sin, which is directly contrary to that illustrious Image which God did imprint upon them ; and perform

## Man's Enmity to God.

III

form those actions which are odious to God and his Righteousness, and suitable to their Corruption.

Men glory in that which is their shame; Phil. 3.19. and account that their Ornament which is the greatest Blot upon their Nature, which if it were upon God would make him cease to be God.

### 3dly. Enmity to the Wisdom of God.

Presumptuous sins are called a Reproach of God; Numb. 15. 30. The soul that doth ought presumptuously, the same reproaches the Lord. All Reproaches are either for Natural, Moral, or Intellectual Defects: All Reproaches of God must be either for Wickedness, or Weakness; if for Wickedness, his Holiness is deni'd; if for Weakness, his Wisdom is blemished.

### 1. In slighting the Laws of God.

Since God hath no defect in his Understanding, his Will must be the best and wisest, and therefore his Laws highly rational, as being the Orders of the wisest Agent. As God's Understanding apprehends all things in their true



true reason, so his Will enjoins nothing but what is highly good, and makes for the happiness of his Creature; the true means of whose happiness he understands better than Men or Angels can do.

All Laws, though they are enforced by Sovereignty, yet they are, or ought to be, in the composing of them, founded upon Reason, and are indeed Applications of the Law of Nature upon this or that particular Emergency. The Laws of God then, who is *summa ratio*, are purely founded upon the truest reason, though every one of them may not be so clear to us: Therefore they that make alteration in his Precepts, either dogmatically or practically, controul his Wisdom, and charge him with Folly. When men will observe one part of his Law, and not another; pick and chuse where they please, hence it is that Sinners are called Fools in Scripture. 'Tis certainly inexcusable Folly, to contradict undeniable and infallible Wisdom. If Infinite Prudence hath framed the Law, why is not every part of it observed? If it were not made with  
the

the best Wisdom, why is any thing of it observed?

He that receives the Promises of God, and the Testimony of Christ, *sets to his seal, That God is true.* It must thence Joh. 3. 33. undeniably follow, that he that refuseth obedience to his Law, sets to his Seal, That God is foolish.

Men live as though the Commands of God were made in Sport, not by Counsel. If God took Counsel in the making man, there is as much need of Counsel in the right ordering him.

If the defacing his Image by any Sin is a defaming his Wisdom in the Creation, the breaking his Law is a disgracing his Wisdom in the Administration. Were they not rational, God would not enjoin them; and if they are rational, we are enemies to Infinite Wisdom by not complying with them.

2dly. *Is defacing the wise workmanship of God.* 2.

Every sin is a defacing our own souls; which as they are the prime Creatures in the sensible World, had greater Characters of God's Wisdom

in the Fabrick of them. But this Image of God is ruin'd and broken by Sin.

Though the spoiling of it be a scorn of his Holiness, it's also an affront to his Wisdom; because though his Power was the cause of the production of so fair a Being, yet his Wisdom was the guide of his Power, as well as his Holiness the Exemplar whereby he wrought it. If a man had a curious Clock or Watch, which had cost him many years pains, and the strength of his skill to frame; for a man after he had seen and considered it, to cut, flash, and break all, would argue a contempt of the Workman's skill. God hath shown Infinite Art in the Creation of man, but sin unbeautifies man, and bereaves him of his Excellency.

3.

*3dly. Censuring his ways.*

What is our impatience at any passages of his Providence, but a censuring his dealing with us as unjust or unwise; as if we would presume to instruct him better in the management of human Affairs. 'Tis to take upon us to be God's Judges,

Judges, to cite him to our Tribunal to give an account of his administration of things. 'Tis a reviling him because he doth manage things according to his own Will, and not according to ours: 'Tis a striving with God, and a summoning him to the Bar of our Reason, Isa. 45. 9, 10. *Wo to him that strives with his Maker : Shall the clay say to him that fashion'd it , What makest thou ? To quarrel with him , and examine him about his works, why he made them thus, and not thus ; 'Tis a reproaching of God , a contending with him, to instruct him. Job 40. 2 Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him ? he that reproves God, let him answer it.* A Reproof argues a Superiority in Authority, Knowledge, or Goodness. 'Tis a playing *Abfalom's* game ; Oh that I were King in *Israel*, I would do this and that man Justice : So that it is a virtual wishing, Oh that I were King of the World, the Governor of all Creatures, things should be dispos'd more wisely, and more justly.

I 4thly.



4.

4thly. *Prescribing Rules and Methods to God.*

We presume to be God's Tutors, and would sway him according to the dictates of our Wisdom; When we would have a Mercy in this Method which God designs to convey through another Channel; When we would have him take his measures from our humours: This was the ground of *Jonah's* Argument with God, *Jonah* 3. 10. *Jonah* 4. 1. *It displeased Jonah exceedingly; and he was very angry.*

When we make Vows to flatter God into a compliance with our designs; when we pray imperiously for any thing without a due Submission to God's Will; as if we were his Counsellors, and he were bound to follow our humours. Thus would the most glorious of Virgins and Mothers prescribe to Christ a Rule for his miraculous action, *Luke* 2. 48. His Mother said unto him, *Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us?* So *John* 2. 3, 4.

The *Jews* who nail'd him to the Cross, offer'd to believe on him, if he would

would submit to their terms, and gratify their curiosity in descending from the Cross they had fixed him to. Are not most men *Jews* in this, to prescribe terms to God, upon the grant whereof he shall have our service of believing in him. As if a Child should appoint Rules for his Father, or a crazy headed Patient to his Physician; would it not be an injury to their prudence and skill? This presumptuous humour is a hellish offence. *Abraham* asserts the way of God's appointment by *Moses* and the Prophets, to be the best way for bringing men to Repentance and Salvation, but the Rich man prefers his own Judgment, and would have him send one from the dead to preach to them. *Luke* 16. 27, 28, 29, 30. *Abraham* saith unto him, *They have Moses and the Prophets*; and he said, *Nay, father Abraham*.

We deal often thus with God, as though we were his Counsellors, not his Subjects.

4thly. *Enmity to the Sufficiency of God.*

The preferring any sin before God, is a denial of the fulness of Content to

be had in the enjoyment of God; as though God were inferior to a base Lust, and that a vile Pleasure had a better relish than the Communications of God to the Soul. For when God describes what pleasure and peace there is in his ways, what fulness of joy in his Presence; what is the refusal of it but equivalent to this language of the sinner; No, I will believe no such thing; there is more happiness to be had in Sin than in God? and so he values a Vapour, an empty Bubble, more than Infinite Fulness. The greater is the Scorn of God's Sufficiency, by how much the more ignoble, brutish, and contemptible the Pleasure is we prefer before him.

I. *1st. In secret thoughts of meriting by any Religious Act.*

As though God could be indebted to us, and obliged by us. As though our Devotions could bring a blessedness to God more than he essentially hath; when indeed *our goodness extends not to him*, Psal. 136. 2. Our Services of God are rather services to our selves, and bring a happiness to us, not to God.  
This

This secret opinion of Merit (though disputed against the Papists, yet) is natural to man; and this secret self-pleasing, when we have performed any duty, and upon that account expect some fair compensation from God, as having been profitable to him.

God intimates this, *Psal. 50. 11, 12.* *The wild beasts of the field are mine; if I were hungry I would not tell thee; for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.* He implies, that they wrong'd his Infinite Fulness, by thinking that he stood in need of their Sacrifices and Services, and that he was beholden to them for their Adoration of him. All Merit implies a moral or natural Insufficiency in the Person of whom we merit, and our doing something for him, which he could not, or at least so well do for himself. 'Tis implied in our murmuring at God's dealing with us in a course of cross Providences, wherein men think they have deserv'd better at the hands of God by their service, than to be so cast aside and degraded by him. In our Prosperity we are apt to have secret thoughts that our Enjoyments were the



Debts God owed us, rather than Gifts freely bestow'd upon us. Hence it is that men are more unwilling to part with their Righteousness than with their Sins, and are apt to challenge Salvation as a Due, rather than beg it as an Act of Grace.

2. *2dly. Trying all ways of helping our selves, before we come to God.*

Having hopes to find That in Creatures, which is only to be found in an All-sufficient God.

When we rather seek an Alms from the World than God, as though there were some hidden Excellency in the World, which over-topp'd the Excellency of God. When we would rather drink of Cisterns than of the Fountain; as though the Waters in the Cistern were fresher and sweeter than those in the Spring.

Hence it is that upon any Emergency we set our own Reason on work, before we crave the Assistance of God's Power; and scarce seek him, till we have modell'd the whole Contrivance in our own Brains, and resolv'd upon the

the methods of performance ; as though there were not a fulness of reason in God to guide us in our Resolves, as well as power to breathe success upon them, *Prov. 20. 25. After vows to make enquiry,* after Resolutions to beg direction in our business.

Sometimes men seek out unlawful ways for their delivery, as though there were more sufficiency of help in Sin, than in God.

Did we believe, and love the Sufficiency of God, that is able to supply our wants, we should not upon every strait be turn'd from him, and beg help at the door of Creatures.

3dly, *In our Apostacies from God.*

3.

When after fair Pretences and devout Applications, we grow cold, and thrust him from us, it implies, that God hath not that fulness in him which we expected. Backsliding testifies, that there is not that sweetness, and satisfactoriness in God, which we expected upon our first approach to him. All apostacy is a denial of God ; for it denies him either to be a fountain of all good, or else

else that he is not true to his Promises, but deceives us in our just expectations of good from him. It either speaks him evil, or deceitful; 'tis a greater affront to deny him after an experience of his sweetness, and assistance, than to deny him before any dealing with him, or trial of him. Now though all apostacy begins in a neglect, yet it quickly ripens into a hatred.

4. 4thly. *In joining some thing with God to make up our happiness.*

Though men are willing to have the enjoyment of God, yet they are not content with him alone, but would have something else to eke him out; as though God, who accounts the enjoyment of himself the greatest blessedness, had not also in himself a sufficient blessedness for his Creatures, without the addition of any thing else.

The Young man in the Gospel went away sorrowful, because he could not enjoy God and the World both together, *Matth. 19. 21, 22.*

If we would light up Candles in a clear day, when the Sun shines in its full

full brightness, what do we imply, but that the Sun hath not light enough in it self to make it day? And when we labour for other things with as much strength and eagerness, as we labour for the enjoyment of God, what is it, but to deny that there is enough in him without the concurrence of some other good?

5thly. *Against the Omniscience of God.*

5.

Men hate God's Omniscience, and could willingly have him stript of this Eminency. For men naturally love not those that dive into their Purposes, and canvass their Thoughts; so neither can men love this Attribute of God, whereby he enters into the secret closets of their heart, and takes an exact measure of every wicked and subtile Contrivance.

The first Speech that *Adam* spake in Paradise after his Fall, infring'd God's Omniscience, *Gen. 3. 10. I heard thy voice in the garden, and I hid my self.* As if the Trees could shelter him from that Eye that saw the minutest part of the whole Earth.

The



The next Speech recorded of the second man, *Cain*, is to the same purpose; when God put the question to him, *Where is thy brother?* Gen. 4. 9. *I know not*; thinking thereby to delude God's Omniscieny. He that practically denies God's Omniscieny, denies his Godhead: For a man may as well deny that there is a Sun, as deny that it shines, and disperseth its light and influence into every corner. See more of this in the Discourse of God's Omnipresence.

This appears,

- I. *When we commit sin upon the ground of secrecy.*

If all hearts, surely then all places are open to God's Eye; no private Bench for a Drunkard, or secret Stew for an Adulterer, but is obvious to him. Common Modesty before man, is not practised before God: Men are ashamed to have their actions seen by man's eye, but not by God's. *Maxima debetur pueris reverentia.* Filthy actions cannot endure the presence of a Child's eye, much less of man's. Shall the presence of a Child have more power over

us than the presence of God ; and mens observing, more than God's censuring Eye? Is not this a denial of him, when the Eye of God is of less force to restrain thee, than the eye of man ; as if men only could see , and God were blind ? All the sin thou committest before the eye of the holiest man in the world, cannot make him hate thee so much as God hates thee ; because his Holiness is infinitely short of God's Holiness , and consequently his Hatred is infinitely short of God's.

'Tis an aggravation of a man's sin, to be committed in the presence of God. *Gen. 10. 9. A mighty Hunter before the Lord.* As it was of *Haman's* Offence, when he lay upon *Esther's* Bed, That he would force the Queen *before the King's face.* It seems to be *David's* conceit in his Sin, That God would not see him, both by *Nathan's* charge, *2 Sam. 2. 19.* Wherefore hast thou despised the Commandment of the Lord, *to do evil in his sight?* and by his own confession, *Psal. 51. 4. This evil have I done in thy sight.* Every Penitent takes notice of the Wrong he doth to God's All-seeing Eye.

**Eye.** It's a high provocation for a Servant to do ill when his Master's Eye is upon him, or a Thief to cut a Purse before the Judge's face. God observes all Wickedness; Wickedness under Lock and Key. If he doth register all thy Members in his Book, he will also register the sins of those Members, what use thou puttest them to, whether to his Service, or the Devil's Drudgery; whether thy Eye rove about in wanton Glances, or thy Tongue be let loose in prophane Language, or thy Ear open to ungodly Discourse, or thy Feet more swift to carry thee to an Alehouse than a Sermon.

It was once a Check a Young man gave to a Harlot, who had enticed him, and carried him from one Room to another for secrecy; Oh, saith he, can none see us here? Can we be hid from God's Eye?

Yet sinners in their practice make their boast, as they, *Job 22. 14.* in express words, *Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he sees not, and he walks in the circuit of heaven:* As though God's Eye could not pierce the thick Clouds; as though

though his Cares were confin'd only to Celestial things, and Earth were too low an Orb for his Eyes to roul about. If we think a word in the presence of a grave religious man may disgrace us, we are troubled in our minds ; but we regard not an Injury done to God. We are more cast down, if a foolish action of ours comes to the knowledge of men, than to the knowledge of God.

2dly. *When men give liberty to inward sins.*

2.

God doth often set forth himself by that expreffion, That he *trieth the heart, and searcheth the reins*. The heart hath man Valves and Ventricles, but God searches all the Valves, which cannot be espied and discerned but by a curious eye. God sees all the Contrivanees of it.

The Reins are partly hid, most inward, surrounded with Fat. The most inward thoughts cannot be hid from God's piercing Eye, for all is open before him, like dissected Sacrifices when the Bowels are ript up, and all the Inwards discovered.

God



God is more within the Soul of a Creature, than any one hidden thought can be, and knows it before the heart that mints it hath a full discovery of it. What do the actings of Sin in our Fancies import, but as though God's eye could not pierce into the remoteness and darkness of our minds?

2 Kings  
21. 4.

Rom. 2. 16.

*Manasseh* is blam'd for setting up strange Altars in the House of God; much more may we for setting up strange Imaginations in the heart, which should belong to God. This is to deny God's Judicial Prerogative; this is the Attribute which speaks him fit to be a Judge, and yet men can possess their hearts with this, That he is defective in this Attribute, and so make him incapable of judging the World. Hypocrisy is a plain denial of this Omnis-ciency. When men have a Religious Lip, and a black Soul; an outside swept and garnished, and a Legion of Devils garison'd within. This derogates from God, as though his Eye were as easily deceived as mens, and an outward appearance limited God's Observation. Are we not more slight in the performance

mance of private Devotions before God, than we are in our Attendances in publick in the sight of men.

3dly. *When men give way to diversions in a Duty*, it is a denial of God's Omniscience. Love is the cause of fixedness. The Angels have a pure affection to God, and therefore they have an uninterrupted attention in his Presence. If thou thinkest God doth not mind thee, why dost thou pray at all? If thou thinkest he doth mind thee, why dost thou not pray more fervently, fixedly, and hear more attentively? This attention doth consist in the frame of the Soul; for bodily Exercise is requir'd for our sakes, not for God's. Gesture and Speech are to quicken our affections. Christ hath given us a short Pattern of Prayer, and can our hearts be steady upon God in the repetition of it? Duties are Visits we pay to God; would it not be an Affront, if when we were to visit a Prince, we should send a noy-som rotten Carcass in our stead? Do we not deal so with God, when we come without our heart, as though

3.

K

God

God were ignorant, and could be put off with any thing, the worst in our *Flocks*, as well as the best.

It wrongs the Majesty of God's Presence, that when he speaks to us, we will not give him so much Respect as to regard him; and when we speak to him, we do not regard our selves. What a vain thing is it, to be speaking to a Scullion when the King is in presence? Every careless diversion to a vain Object, is a denial of God's presence in the place.

'Tis a wrong to God's Excellency, that when we come to God for what we count sweet and desirable, we presently turn our backs, as though our address were an act of imprudence and folly; as much as to say, There is no sweetness in him, no beauty that we should desire him.

6. *6thly.* Enmity to the Mercy of God. God is not wronged more in any Attribute by Devils and Men, than in his Mercy. Man would deprive God of the honour of his own Bowels; of the Objects of Mercy; when God's Mercy

to others comes in competition with his Self-love and Credit. *Jonas* his Pride would null the Goodness of God. With what an unreasonable Passion doth he fly in the face of God, for relieving the humbled *Ninivites*? he would rather have had his own Credit preserv'd in the destruction of them according to his Prediction, than God's tenderness magnified in their Preservation.

Some fancy a God made up altogether of Mercy, a Childish Mercy, as if his Mercy had nothing else to do, but to wrong all his other Perfections; to make him bely his Truth, extinguish his Justice, discard his Wisdom, and enslave his Power. This appears,

I. In the severe and jealous thoughts men have of God.

I.

Men are apt to charge God with Tyranny, whereby they strip him of the Riches of his glorious Mercy. The Devil's design at first was to bely God to man, that he might have hard and contracted thoughts of God, to think him strait-handed towards his Creature.



Joh. 8. 44. Therefore he is call'd a *Liar from the beginning*, in urging man to misbelieve his Creator to be an unjust, hard, and cruel Master, and that envied him Comforts necessary for him; which frightful thoughts of the Deity have haunted man ever since. If man in Creation was so ready to entertain Jealousies of God, man in Corruption, with the load of Guilt upon him, is much more prone.

The Heathens (by the Devil's instigation), as the *Indians*, have their Notions, That Mercy flows not naturally from God, but must be wrested by a multitude of Services; that he will do nothing without the Bribe of a Sacrifice; which they offer, lest he should hurt them. As if God only created men, to make sport with their misery: As if God had no other design in the Creation, than to load his Creatures with Chains, and govern that World by Tyranny, which he made by an Efflux of powerful Goodness. The Worship of many men is founded upon this conceit, whereby they are frighted into some actions of Adoration, not sweetly drawn.

drawn. This representation of God doth debase the Soul, and fills it with that tyrannical passion of Fear, which is alway accompanied with Hatred; for we hate what we fear. Thus the Devil accuseth God to troubled Consciences, perswading them that his Bowels are strait, that he hath no Mercy for them, that so he may drive them to despair. This he attain'd in *Cain*, who cries in despair, *My punishment is greater than I can bear*; i. e. my sin is greater than can be pardon'd, *Gen. 4. 13.*

When any Soul is like to be snatcht out of Satan's hands, he makes it interpret those acts wherein God means favour, to be acts of Enmity.

So that the main work God hath to do after Conviction, is to perswade the Soul to have good thoughts of him. Hence doth arise that unwillingness in the Soul to come to God. How can we approach to him, of whom we have such narrow thoughts, and judge of according to our own revengeful humours? How can we do otherwise but hate him, when we represent him as one easily angry, hardly appeas'd, of

a cruel nature; a *Minos*, a *Rhadamanthus*, or *Phalaris*, rather than an Infinite Mirror of Sweetness and Love. If we do not think him so, why do we stand off from him? Hence ariseth our wrong constructions of Providence, and sinister interpretations of God's acts; when we attribute to God such ends as have no other foundation but our own foolish Fancy.

Thus *Manoah* interprets the Angel's coming, which was an act of God's kindness to him, to be an ill-meant Providence, *Judg.* 13. 22.

Now as it is the quality of Love to think no evil, so it is the property of Hatred to think all evil. And as when a man hates Sin, he cannot endure any varnish of an Excuse to be put upon it, and cannot speak or think too bad of it; so when a man hates God, he cannot endure to have a good gloss put upon his actions.

2. 2dly. *Slighting his Mercy, and robbing him of the end of it.*

The wilful breaking of a Prince's Laws, upon the observance whereof great

great Rewards are promised, is not only a despising his Sovereignty, but a fighting his Goodness, in the Rewards proffer'd to the Observers. Rebels that stand it out Against Proclamations of Pardon, do what in them lies to deprive the Prince of any Objects to show his Clemency on. So obstinate Sinners against Mercy would as far as they are able, deprive God of any subject to magnify his Mercy on, especially when they do not only stand it out against so gracious Proffers of God, but draw in others to take up Arms against him: Every sin in this respect is a stealing the glory of this Attribute from God, in denying him that Tribute of Obedience which is due to him for it. Often this Enmity riseth higher; and whereas men should *fear* him, because he is ready to forgive, *Psal.* 130. 4. they rather slight him, and presume to sin, because he hath mercy to pardon. And so make that which should cherish their Obedience, to be a Spur to their Rebellion; and encourage their future Offences by that Goodness which should excite a Fear and holy Awe of him in their



Souls. Because God is gracious, men will be more vicious; hence they are said to *despise his goodness*, Rom. 2. 4. And that Patience which should teach them Repentance, inflames their Hatred, and in this humour they turn

Ecccl. 8. 11. Grace it self into Wantonness.

7. *7thly. Enmity to the Justice of God.*

When men wish there were no God, they wish this at least, that God were uncloath'd of those Perfections which are averse and dreadful to their guilty Consciences: Scarce a man but hath flattering Fancies, that God is not so terrible as he is represented.

This appears,

- I. *1. In not fearing it, but running under the lash of it.* Sin is an act of Rebellion, and Rebels fear not the Justice, or else hope to overcome the Power of their Superior. Would not men be afraid to spit in the face of Heaven, did they really believe there was a God who was just and righteous, and would not let any sin go unpunished? The Prophet speaks of some that had *wearied* God with

with their Sins, and made him serve with their Iniquities, *Isa. 43. 24.* as if God were bound to endure their evil Carriage against him with patience, and never to unsheath the Sword of his Justice.

How often are men upon this account said to have a rocky Heart, and iron Sinews, that will neither be broken, nor bent? Are not the *Belshazzars* of the World merry, though the hand-writing be upon the Wall against them.

Thus men commit sin with *greediness*, and are *past feeling*, *Eph. 4. 19.* daring the Justice of God, and without any sense of revenge due to sin; and say, To-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant. Nay, I dare aver, that if a man who had been scorcht in Hell, should again enjoy his wonted Pleasures, and have all the while a fresh remembrance of his late Torments, were not his Will chang'd by a powerful grace, he would stand it out as stiffly against God as ever, notwithstanding those terrible marks of Wrath, and be without a holy fear of that Justice which he had felt.

2dly,

2. 2dly. *Sinuing under the strokes of Justice.*

Men will not turn to God that smites them, though they have hypocritical howlings upon their Beds under God's stroke, *Hos. 7. 13, 14. Isa. 9. 13.* They will roar under the stroke, but not submit to the Striker. 'Tis the Witch of *Endor*, or the God of *Ekron* shall have their Addresses, and not the God of Heaven.

3. 3dly. *In hoping easily to evade it.*

There are sometimes secret thoughts, that a man is able to maintain himself against all the force God can use; which the Apostle implies, *1 Cor. 10. 22. Are we stronger than he?* Do we think to try it out at Arms length with God? Sin implies a mastering God's all-powerful Justice. Sometimes men will argue for Impiety from their present impunity; and because *he keeps silence*, think that he will not publish a condemning Sentence, *Psal. 50. 21.* And because God forbears, think that he hath forgotten to punish, *Psal. 10. 11. God hath forgotten.* Some-

Sometimes we fancy God like to our selves, mutable with every Wind; as soon appeas'd as angry; either unable to resist the force of our Prayers, or easily enticed by our good words and praises of him, as though he were to be flatter'd out of his just Anger, his holy and righteous Nature, *Psal 78. 36. They flatter'd him with their mouth.* As if he needed our Trifles, and Rattles, as Children do, to appease them. Or might be wrought upon as the poor *Indians*, to give the Gold of Heaven for a few Beads.

They fancy him a God of Wax, whom they can bend at their pleasure; either so weak, that he cannot, or of so soft a disposition, that he will not be reveng'd of Sin; and that a few sighs will blow away a storm of Wrath. Hence men invent ways of pleasing God after they have offended him; and think to expiate the sin of their Soul, by the offering their Substance, or presenting some melancholy Devotions, or inflicting some Self-chastisements. As if God were to be brib'd by the Blood of a Lamb, or Goat, or by some superstitious and formal



mal Services, to change his provoked Justice into an easy Clemency.

8. 8thly. *Enmity to the truth of God.*

Most men live upon trust for their knowledge, and know far more by the relation, and upon the credit of others, than upon certain demonstrations; as that there are such Places as *China, Peru, Mexico*. And why are men so backward in believing God, speaking in his Word? 'Tis clear hereby, that men have not so great an enmity against one another, as they have against God.

This appears,

1. *In not believing his Threatnings.*

Men believe not either the matter, or sudden execution of them. Our Faith is more operative upon Reports from Men, than Revelations from God. Men will believe Stories of Danger, so as to avoid the Places wherein they may be liable to it. Yet though God tells them what the issue of Sin will be, how certainly it will destroy them, they will walk on in their own way. Men look upon Hell as a painted Fire, upon the Threat-

Threatnings as Scarecrows, without a Scing, and are not so much affected with them, as at the reading of a Tragedy. Would men be so stupid, as not to stir out of the fire, if they did really believe God were true? they are apt to fear others that threaten inferior punishments, and not to fear God who threatens everlasting Woe. But think to find mercy in the way of Sin, though God assures them to the contrary. How soon did the *Israelites* lose the sense of the Thunder, which terrified them when the Law was given? Like those Sponges that Thunder will pass through. Such are secure Persons through whom the thunder of God's Threatnings will pass, without doing any hurt. A contrite heart trembles at the Word, because he acknowledges it to be true; whereas a proud heart is like an unmoved Rock, that is not daunted at God's Threatnings, as imagining them to be false. If a man doth at first believe them, yet if God delays the execution of them, he thinks they were in jest with him, and takes delays for denials, *Luke 12. 45.* *My Master delays his coming.* This temper

per is call'd a belying of God, *Jer. 5. 12.*  
*'Tis not he, this evil shall not come upon us.*

2.

2dly. *His Promises.*

Man is more prone to believe God's Promises, than Threatnings, because men are naturally credulous of that which makes for their interest; therefore God made the *Jews* to say *Amen* to the Curses, *Deut. 27. 26.* Not to the Blessings, *Deut. 28.* because they were ready to slight Threatnings, and snatch at Promises. But yet even his words of Grace are not credited by men; hence it is, that they are not allur'd by his gracious Proffers, which would work upon men, if they really believ'd that God intended as he spake. All the unbelief in the World gives God the lie; the greatest indignity among the Sons of Men, *1 Joh. 5. 10.* *He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar.* We believe the Promises of a Man, that is a lie, as the *Psalmist* speaks, and hath deceived us; and rely upon a vain Creature that fails, rather than upon the true and living God. Like the foolish *Indians*, part with the Gold of God's Promises  
 for

for Glass and Ribbons, brittle and gaudy things. Present things do more affect us, than future. It was the present World Demas lov'd more than a future Crown, 2 Tim. 4. 10. Sensible Trifles are esteemed more valuable than invisible and eternal Excellency. Men look upon Heaven as a Poet's *Elizium*, a Dream and Fancy, and the promise of Christ's coming to be the greatest falshood, 2 Pet. 3, 4. *Where is the promise of his coming?* 'Tis an undervaluing God's Veracity, to be led by Sense, a brutish Principle; rather than by God, who is Truth it self. Our following the Dictates of Natural Reason against Revelation, is not so derogatory, as the making Sense our Guide.

9thly. *Enmity to his Providence.*

9.

By denying his Truth, we deny his Providence: For as the crediting the truth of one another, keeps up commerce in the World; so the Veracity of God on his part, and the Sincerity of Man, keep up an intercourse between God and the World. Some have thought God a sleepy God, as though he  
never



never cared how the World moved, so he might rest, *Zeph. 1. 12.* Some thought it below God's Majesty to mind sublunary things, as though it were more unworthy for God to govern them, than it was to create them. This appears,

1. *1. In ascribing his Works to second Causes.*

When we look upon second Causes as the Authors of Benefits we enjoy, and attribute to them what is due to God, and ascribe them to blind Chance, or to the dexterity of our own Wit, and thither return our Thank-offerings, *Hab. 1. 16. They sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense to their drag.* Deifying the Creature, the Instrument, without any, or a formal regard to the chief Actor. In Chastisements we look not upon Sin as the meritorious, or God as the efficient Cause. Thus *Balaam* spurr'd on his Ass, and never consider'd the Angel that stood in the way. Many regard Instruments, and never consider God, who doth all the Evil in the City; and thus rob God both of the honour of his Mercies, and the Obedience requir'd both by him and his Chastisements.

2dly.

2dly. *In the offence we take, and the resistance we make to his Providences if they cross our will.* 2.

Sometimes men will charge the Providence of God in times of Affliction, That he is unjust towards them, and inflicts Punishments when they deserve Rewards; therefore the Spirit of God gives it as the commendation of *Job*, that *in all this*, i. e. in those many Afflictions, he did *not charge God foolishly*, *Job* 1. 22. a praise scarce to be given to any man in the World. We are apt to murmur, as if God were bound to take care of us, and act all for our good, and neglect the whole World besides; or as though it were fitter for him to govern according to our foolish Wills, than his own wise and righteous Will. Sometimes men will oppose the Designs of his Providence.

The *Gadarenes* are so startled at the loss of. their Swine, that with a joint consent they desire Christ to depart from their Coasts, having no mind to entertain his Person or his Doctrine, Mat. 8. 31.

L

when

when they should rather have been moved by his miraculous Power and his Preaching, to have enquired into the Gospel which he preached. When the carnal Interest of mens Grandeur is struck at, they will quarrel at the powerful ways of God, *Acts* 5. 16, 17. The High Priests and Sadduces were fill'd with indignation at the Apostles Miracles, which had reason enough to convince them, had they not had too much malice to withstand them. Instead of submitting to the Rod, we rage against God, when he is correcting us; and like Chaff, flye in the face of him that fans us. Not like Children, submitting to a Father; but like Rebels, denying his Superiority over us.

3. 3dly. *In our misinterpretations of Providence.*

*Shimei* misinterpreted the Providence of God, when *David* fled from *Jerusalem* upon his Son *Absalom's* Rebellion. Oh, saith he, now God will revenge the House of *Saul*, *2 Sam.* 16. 7, 8.

We will put interpretations upon God's Acts according to our Fancies, Humours

Humours and Wishes ; therefore the Spirit of God takes particular notice, that *Shimei* was of the House of *Saul*, and therefore according to his own humour accounted this a punishment, for his outing the House of *Saul* from the Government. This is a high usurpation of God's Prerogative, who is the best Interpreter of his own Acts, as well as his Laws.

10thly. *Enmity to his Content and Pleasure.* 10.

1. *In his Nature.*

Such an enmity there is in Sin, that it strives to make a confusion in God himself, a war in his very Nature : For Sin put God to his infinite Wisdom to satisfy all the Perfections of his Nature. If he spar'd the Sinner, how could he be just ? if he destroy'd him, how could he be merciful ? What Wit of Men or Angels could contrive a way to compose those Attributes, and make Truth and Righteousness, Mercy and Justice, to kiss each other, and still those Jars which Sin endeavour'd to make between them ?

L 2

If



If Justice should have its full due, what would become of the Creature? If Mercy should only act its part, what would become of the Righteousness of God's Nature? If the Creature should be damn'd by the Severity of Justice, Mercy might sit weeping for want of Objects, unless new ones were created. If Mercy should have its contentment in the impunity of the Sinner, Righteousness and Truth might bewail the want of a due Satisfaction. The heart of Mercy would be broken, if Sin were punished; and the cry of Justice would be perpetual, unless the Sinner fell under his own demerits. That surely is the greatest Enemy, that endeavours to set division in a man's own Family, and Nature.

2.

2dly. *In his Works.*

Men endeavour to disappoint God of his Glory, the end of his Creation, and the tenderest Jewel he reserves for his own use, and will not impart to another. God created all things for himself, and Man by turning them to another use, evidenceth, that he would not let God have the pleasure of his own Works, or  
the

the Rent due to him for them. Sin made him repent that ever he put his hand to the framing that World, which after the Creation he had pronounced good; and made God be griev'd at his own Creatures, which with so much Wisdom he made, and so much delight acquiesced in. God requires no more of Man for all his Benefits, but a Service, and they deny him this, and endeavour to make him weary of his life, as if we studied how we could most vex and disquiet him, *Ezek. 16. 43. Thou hast fretted me in all those things.*

God created the World to have a Service from his rational Creatures, and yet their Services naturally, as well as their Sins, are a trouble to him, and tire him, that he is ready to shake the World in pieces, *Isa. 1. 14. Your appointed feasts my soul hateth, I am weary to bear them, they are a trouble to me; so that he can have no ease but in the Acts of Vengeance, V. 24. Ah, I will ease me of my adversaries, and avenge me of my enemies.*

God created the World, not for any need he had of it, but to communicate

his own goodness, and made Man as a choice Vessel to receive it ; but Man shrinks his Soul, that goodness cannot enter upon him , and so endeavours to frustrate God of this End. Can there be a greater contempt, than to deny God the satisfaction of his own Works?

Now to sum up all that hath been said. Suppose, if it were possible, that there were another God to judge, or an indifferent Person to judge between God and Men of this World, and had a Copy of all the Laws and Promises, Records of all God's dealings, would he not judge by the practice of Men, that God was some cruel *Pharaoh*, that notwithstanding all his fair words and promises, minded nothing but the destruction of his Creature ; and that Man had some high provocations from God, to act so against the Laws of Goodness, and Proposals of eminent Rewards? That God had no Excellency to make him desirable, but that he were the most despicable, contemptible, unworthy Being in the whole World. All the Actions and Practices of Men testify thus much, that he is a weak, impure, cruel,

cruel, false, empty, shallow, inconsiderable Being, and one that hath no Authority over him; a Pattern not fit to be imitated, one that hath been injurious to him, &c. An indifferent Person, that had no knowledge of God, viewing his Laws, would have a high opinion of him; but again considering the Practices of his Creatures, he could not but think that some great provocation was offer'd by God to Men; that he was full of dissimulation; he could not otherwise think that there should be so general a defection from him.

But to declare this Enmity further, it will be evident, by considering what enmity there is against all that comes from him; both the Truths he reveals, and the Duties he enjoins.

*1. Enmity against his Truths.*

I.

Hating Instruction is a part of Atheism, *Psal. 50. 17. Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee.* God complains in *Hos. 8. 12.* that the most excellent things were accounted as a strange thing. God had given



them the great things of his Law, and they esteemed them not.

- I. 1. *In mens loathness to believe any Divine Truth; or to meditate upon it.*

Men shun the thoughts of what they do not love; if we will not let Truth in, which is a Message from Heaven, it is a sign we care not for the Person from whom it comes.

- I. 1. *'Tis hard to believe Moral or Divine Truths.*

Because they are against the interests of our Lusts, and would eject those Principles which have got so firm footing in our Minds and Affections, and would bring them into such a reform'd Course, which our Minds byass'd by such Principles, do exceedingly hate: Whereas Natural or Mathematical Verities are readily credited, and kindly entertain'd, because they thwart not our Principles, as the others do.

The more divine and spiritual the Object is, the more unwilling we are to close with it: And by how much the nearer any notion of truth is to God,  
and

and the more clearly representing him, the more averse are we from it. And if men are enemies to that truth which doth most clearly discover God, and his mind, and cannot endure the thoughts of it, much less can they endure the thoughts of God himself. They are loth to entertain any thing that may disquiet them.

Christ describes this Humour, as it was in *Noah's* time, and as it will be towards the end of the World: They were eating and drinking, as though the World were their own, and loth to think of a Deluge; and at the latter end men will as hardly believe the burning, as they did then the drowning of the World. Matth. 24. 38, 39.

The *Pharisees* derided the soundest Doctrine, *Luke* 16. 14. They derided him, *subsannarunt*; ἐξευκτρίζον, they blew their Noses at him in contempt, when he declaim'd against their Covetousness.

2dly. If the Word lays hold upon a man, he endeavours to shake it off, as a Man would a Serjeant, which comes to arrest

2.

arrest him. Men like not to retain God in their knowledge, Rom. 1. 28. If any Truth presseth in upon them, they turn it away, as Men do importunate Beggars; We have nothing for you; Do not trouble us, we have no Alms to bestow upon you: And the reason is, because Men having abortivated and deadned all those reliques and natural infusions of God in their Soul, any lively Truth and Apprehensions of him proves most unfavoury: As Wine and Strongwaters, which have lost their natural Spirit, become most ungrateful and unpleasant to the Stomach; so those innate impressions of God which are so refreshing to a good Man, they do what they can to shake off or taint them, by mingling with them their own corrupt Notions; and when they cannot, they are fill'd with an irreligious rancour against God. Men keep the Truths that rise up in themselves for conviction and instruction, in unrighteousness, and quench the motions of the Blessed Spirit, killing them in the Womb. Have not Men often had secret Wishes, that the Scripture had never mention'd  
some

Some Truths, or that they were blotted out of the Bible, because they face their Consciences, damp their Pleasures, and cool their boiling Lusts, which else they would with eagerness and delight pursue.

3ly. When Men cannot shake off a Truth, but it sticks fast in them, yet *they have no pleasure in the consideration of it.*

3.

Which would be if there were a love to God: for Men love to read over the Letters which are sent by them to whom they have an affection, and stick them up, or peruse them afterwards at their leisure. And it was an unclean Beast that did not chew the Cud under the Law; so it is a corrupt Heart that doth not chew Truth by Meditation. Hence a natural Man is said *not to know* the Things of God; for while he is inclin'd to a sensual life, he can have no delight in spiritual things, for Sensuality hinders the Operations of his Soul about the choicest Objects.

Natural Men may indeed meditate on a Truth, but they do not delight in it;



it; or if they do, it is only as it is Knowledge: for we delight in nothing that we desire, but upon the same account that we desire it. Now Natural Men desire to know God, and some Truths; not out of a sense of his Excellency, but from a natural thirst after Knowledge; so that they rejoice in the Act, not in the Object; not to quicken their Affections, as idle Boys strike fire; not to kindle any thing, but please themselves with the Sparks; Whereas a gracious Soul accounts not only his Meditation, or the Operation of his Soul about a thing to be sweet, but he hath a Spiritual Joy in the Object of that Meditation. Many have the Knowledge of God, who have no delight in it; as Owls and Batts have Eyes to perceive the Light, but by reason of the Weakness of their Sight have no delight in it to look cheerfully upon it; so neither can a Man by his natural or acquir'd Knowledge delight in God, or love to look upon him, because of his Corruption.

2ly. In

2ly. In their *Opposition to it.*

2.

1. *External.*

1.

In the first dawning of the Gospel, what Opposition did the Apostles meet with? What Persecutions were rais'd against them? How did the Carnal World, like Dogs, bark at the shining of the Moon? 'Tis as natural for Man to persecute the Truth, which is against the grain, as it is for them to breathe. When *Socrates* upon Natural Principles did confute the Heathen Idolatry, and asserted the Unity of God, the whole Cry of *Athens*, a learn'd University, is against him; and because he oppos'd the publick receiv'd Religion, he must die, *Acts* 13. 45. *Contradicting* and *Blaspheming* are put together; Disputes against the Word many times ends in Blasphemies.

2. *Internal.*

2.

God's Truths cast against a hard Heart, are like Balls thrown against a Stone-wall, which rebound the further from it; such a resistance there is in Man,

Man, to beat back all the Tenders of Grace. Where the Grace of God comes in any power, it doth accidentally stir up Sin in the Heart ; as when the Sun shines upon a noisom Dunghil, it stinks the worse ; not that the Sun communicates any filthiness or pollution to the Dunghil, but by accident in warming it, it makes the stench break forth. Sin, as a Garison in a City, is up in Arms upon any alarm from its Adversary. A Word of God against the great *Diana* of a man's Lust, sets the whole Soul in an uproar ; Sin follows the steps of its Father the Devil, and endeavours to bruise the Heel of Truth, which would break the Head of Lust. Men hate the Truths of God, when they begin to search and rent their belov'd Corruptions. So *Ahab*, 1 Kings 22. 8. *I hate him, for he doth not prophecy good concerning me, but evil.* John 3. 19, 20. *Lest their deeds should be reprov'd.* As Apes are reported to break the Glass, because they would not see their own deformity. The Light of Speculation may be pleasant, but the Light of Conviction is grievous ; The Light strikes

too strongly upon their sore Eyes, and makes them smart.

3ly. If Men do entertain Truth, *'tis not for Truth's sake, but for some other by-end.*

3.

Truth is scarcely receiv'd as Truth; there is more of Hypocrisy than Sincerity in the Pale of the Church: The Dowry makes it more desirable than the Beauty. *Judas* follows Christ for the Bag. Sometimes Men entertain Truth to satisfy their own Passions, rather than upon God's account. The Religion of many is not the Judgment of the Man, but the Passion of the Brute. Many rather entertain the Doctrine for the Person's sake, than the Person for the Doctrine, and believe any thing that comes from a Man they esteem and affect, as if his Lips were as Canonical as Scripture, *1 Thess. 2. 13.* You receiv'd it *not as the Word of Men, but as it is in truth the Word of God.* So that many times the very same Truth deliver'd by another, is disregarded; which when coming from the fancy and mouth of their own Idol, is cried up



up for an Oracle ; whenas, alas ! it was the Truth of God in the Aſſ's, as well as in the Angel's mouth. And thus they have the Word of God with *reſpect of perſons*, and receive it not for the ſake of the Fountain, but of the Channel ; and though they entertain the Truth of God materially, yet not formally as his Truth, *James 2. 1. Have not the faith of Chriſt with reſpect of perſons.*

4. 4ly. *If Men do entertain Truth, 'tis with unſettled affections, and much mixture.*

If Men let in ſome good Notions of God, they let in alſo much of Corruption and Error, like Sponges that can ſuck up the fouleſt Water, as well as the ſweeteſt Wine ; they have the unclean Beaſts enter into the Ark of their Souls, as well as the clean. There is a great Levity in the Heart of Man. The Jews cry *Hofanna* to Chriſt one day, and Crucify him the next. They have their Heart open one day for Truth, and the next turn it out of doors. Thoſe Truths which are eaſy to be under-

understood, are hard to be impress'd: Our Affections will as soon lose them, as our Understandings embrace them. Some were willing to rejoice in *John's* Light, which gave a Lustre to their Minds, not in his Heat; which would have given Warmth to their Affections; for *John* was a burning and a shining Light, and they would rejoice in his Light, but not in his Heat, and in that too but for a season.

We begin in the Spirit, and end in the flesh. We go from God with affections, and quickly grow cold again. Our hearts are like Lute-strings, chang'd with every change of Weather, with every Temptation; and scarce one motion of God in a thousand can prevail upon us.

5thly. *In a carnal Improvement of Truth.*

g.

Some endeavour to make Truth subservient to Lust, and like Spiders draw cursed Poyson out of the sweetest Flowers. As when men hear of God's willingness to pardon and receive repenting Sinners, they will argue from

M

hence,

hence, for deferring their Repentance till they come to dye. So *Psal. 94. 7.* God's Patience is made a Topick whence to argue against his Providence. Wicked men father their sins upon God's Word. A Lyar will find his Refuge in the Rewards God gave the Midwives that lied to *Pharaoh*, for the Preservation of the *Israelites* Children; and *Rahab's* lye for preserving the Spies: Though God rewarded their Fidelity, yet we read not that he approved their Sin. Some will venture into all kind of wicked Company, from Christ's Example, who conversed with Sinners; when Christ companied with Sinners, as a Physician with diseased Persons, to cure them, not to approve them; but these with persons not to communicate Holiness to them, but receive Infection from them. Thus, like the Devil, we have Scripture at our fingers ends to plead for our Lusts. As the Sea turns fresh Water into salt, so a carnal heart turns Divine things to carnal ends. As man subjects the Precepts of God to carnal interest, so they subject the Truths of God to carnal Fancies. Make a humorous

rous and crazy Fancy the Interpreter of Divine Oracles, and not the Spirit speaking in the Word; this is to rifle Truth of its true mind and intent; as it's more to rob a man of his Reason, the essential constitutive part of man, than of his Estate.

2dly. *Enmity against the Duties God doth enjoin*, as well as against the Truths he doth reveal.

2.

We are not willing to come to God in Duty; which strangeness took date from the beginning of our nature. We were *estranged from the womb*, Psal. 58. 3.

I shall instance in Prayer, which is one of the greatest Duties, and is an immediate speaking to God. And in that Duty wherein there is the greatest intimacy with God, there is the greatest Aversion, and consequently an Enmity against God.

1. *Unwillingness to it.*

1.

Men cannot endure to give God a Visit; if they do, it is with such a dulness of spirit, as if they wished themselves out of his Company; which



testifies that men care not for any Correspondence or Friendship between God and their Souls. Man having an Enmity to true Holiness, hath from thence an Enmity to Prayer, because Holiness must at least be pretended in Prayer, because in that Duty there is a real speaking to God, and a Communion with him, unto which Holiness is required. Now as wicked men hate the Truth of Holiness, because it is unsuitable to them, so they are not Friends to the pretence of it in that duty, because they must for some space be diverted from the thoughts of their beloved Lusts. I appeal to you, whether you are not more unwilling to practice Prayer in your Closets, than to join with others, as if it were a going to the Rack, and rather your Penance than Privilege. If men do come to God, it is a constrained Act, to satisfy Conscience; and such are rather servile, than Son-like Performances, and spring from bondage more than affection. If Conscience like a Taskmaster did not lash them to duty, they would never perform it. If we do come willingly, it  
is

is for our own ends, to have some deliverance from some trouble. *Isa. 26. 16. In trouble have they visited thee ; they poured out a prayer when thy chastning was upon them.* In trouble they will visit God ; in prosperity he shall scarce hear of them. In affliction he finds them kneeling, and in prosperity he finds them kicking. They can pour out a Prayer in distress, and scarce drop a Prayer when they are delivered. This unwillingness to address to God, what slight and low thoughts doth it imply ? 'Tis a wrong to his Providence, as tho we stood not in need of his assistance, but that we can do all our business our selves.

'Tis a wrong to his Excellency, as though there were no amiableness in him to make his company desirable. This Enmity is the greater, by how much God's Condescension is the greater to admit us into his presence. It was a part of the Devils hatred ; they were loth to have Christ present with them. *Matth. 8. 29. What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God ?* Men excuse their neglect of private Prayer, by

their want of opportunity ; but indeed they want hearts. We may sooner step up to Heaven with a holy Ejaculation , than step over the Threshold about our business. We naturally desire acquaintance with the greatest Persons that may advance our Interest ; but we are ready to bury our Interest, rather than be acquainted with God.

2. 2dly. *Slightness in the Duty.*

We are loth to come into God's presence, and when we are come, we are loth to keep with him. When men do not their Duty heartily as to the Lord, they look not upon him as their Master, whose Work they ought to do , and whose Honour they ought to aim at.

1. 1. *In respect of time.*

Our dullest and deadeft time we think fittest for God : When sleep is ready to close our eyes, we think it a fit time to open our hearts. How few Morning Sacrifices hath God from men ? They leap out of their Beds to their Pleasures or Worldly Employments, without asking Counsel at  
God's

God's mouth. As men reserve the dregs of their life, their Old Age, to offer up their Souls to God; so they reserve the dregs of the day, their sleepy times, for the offering their Service to God.

2dly. *In respect of frame.*

2.

We think any frame will serve God's turn; which certainly speaks our Enmity, and slight thoughts we have of him. Man naturally performs duty with an unholy heart, whereby it becomes an abomination to God; *Prov. 28. 9.* He that turns away his ear from hearing the Law, even *his prayer shall be an abomination.*

God calls for our best Sacrifices, and we give him the worst, such which he hates. *Amos 5. 21.* *I hate, I despise your feast-days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies.* They were Duties which God commanded, but he hated them for their evil frames, or corrupt ends. God requires Works of Grace, and we present him not with so much as the Work of Nature, but the Work of Corruption. There is not that natural Vigor which we have in Worldly Business;



liness : You may often observe a liveliness in man as to that ; but change the scene into a motion towards God, and how suddenly doth this Vigor shrink, and their hearts become sluggish, freeze with coldness.

Many times we pray as coldly as if we were loth that God should hear us, and take away that Lust which Conscience forceth us to pray against. How flitting are we in Divine Meditations, how sleepy in Spiritual Exercises ? This proceeds from the aversion of the Soul, and its estrangedness from God. But in other Exercises we are active. The Soul doth not awaken it self, and stir up those Animal Spirits in Religious Duties, which it will in Bodily Recreations and Sports ; whereby it is evident we prefer the latter before any Service to God. Since there is a fulness of Animal Spirits in us, why might they not be excited in Holy Duties, as well as in Corporal Operations, but that there is a Reluctancy in the Soul to exercise its Supremacy over them in this case ?

3dly. *Weariness in it.*

3.

We are not weary with that dulness, but in the Duty it self: Our deadness shows a disaffection, our weariness shows a greater: We are loth that God should have so much as a day's service from us, or any thing that looks like a service. How tired are we in the performance of Spiritual Duties, when in the vain triflings of time we have a perpetual motion? How will many force themselves to dance and revel a whole Night, when their hearts will flag and jade at the first entrance into a Religious Service. Some in the Prophet wished the Sabbath over, *Mal. 1. 13.* Ye said also, Behold *what a weariness it is.* Attendance on him is a weariness; God had but a poor polluted Service from them, and they were weary of that little they gave him, they grudg'd him that. This unwieldiness in duty is a sign we receive little Satisfaction in God's company, and that there is a great unsuitableness between him and us. When our Joy begins when the Duty ends, it evidenceth that there

there was no affectionate motion to God, but a tir'd and yawning Service. Unwilling Servants stay not long at their Masters work, neither are cheerful in it. If we did love God, it would be with us as with the Needle towards the Loadstone, there would be a speedy motion, and a fixed Union. Saints in Heaven, whose Affections and Judgments are perfect, behold the Face of God Five or Six thousand Years together without weariness; but we naturally are neither willing to come, nor come to stay in his presence.

*Obj. Natural men had best not pray, or meditate at all, if even their Prayers are acts of Enmity.*

*Ans.* Their Prayers are not acts of Enmity, though the natural Enmity be discover'd in them. In the Male-performance of the Duty, there is a denial of his Holiness, but in the total Omission there is a denial of his Sovereignty, who commands it as a natural duty; or his Providence, who orders human Affairs; of his Holiness too, and Righte-

Righteousness in his Law which enjoins it.

4thly. *Neglect of expecting Answers.*

4.

Men naturally care not for having the Spiritual Mercy they pray for of course from God, though they are desirous of any Temporal ; for the latter they will endeavour, but leave the other wholly upon God's hands, as if they were careless whether they had them or no. They care not whether their Letters come to God's hands or no, and therefore care not much for any returns from him : Whereas if we have any love to a person we send to, or value of a thing we send for, we should expect an Answer every Post.

The Creature in its Natural Instinct goes beyond such persons ; for there is an *ἀνταρξία* ; Rom. 8. 19. For the earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation, &c. Every Creature is in a more waiting posture than a natural man. 'Tis a sign we do not own God for our Master, or our selves for his Servants, if we do not wait upon him till he shew mercy to us. *Psal.*



**123. 2.** *As the eyes of servants look unto the hands of their master, so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, till he have mercy on us.* It implies that we think God will not hear, or cannot hear, or that we have no need of him, and can do well enough without him; or that Prayer is no effectual means to procure Blessings: If so, why dost thou pray at all? If it be otherwise, why dost thou not wait for an Answer? So that there is a disaffection in man to the Duty it self, and to God the Object of it; or to the Subject of it, the thing pray'd for. Whereas those that love God, and love the Spiritual Mercy they pray for, watch thereunto with Thanksgiving. *Col. 4. 2. Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.*

They watch for occasion of Praise. As we are to be in a praying posture, to desire a Blessing, so in a waiting posture to meet with it. But a natural man doth not love to be beholden to God if he can help it; and if he doth praise God after any common Mercy received, it may proceed from a natural Ingenuity, or present sense of the Mercy

Mercy it self, not from any Affection to the Donor: But as for any Spiritual Mercy, as the stirrings of his Affections by any Truth, he is so far from praising God for them, that he is troubled at them, and quickly quencheth them.

5thly. *Desertion of the Duty.*

5.

If God doth not answer us, naturally we cast off the Duty, and say with those in *Job*, *Job 21. 15. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray to him?* They pray not out of Conscience of the Command, but merely for the Profit; and if God makes them wait for it, they will not wait his leisure, but sollicite him no longer. There are two things express'd; That God was not worthy of their Service; and, That the serving of him would not bring them in a good Revenue, or an advantage of that kind they expected. 'Tis Interest draws men on to Prayer; and when that is not advanc'd, they will beg no more; like some Beggars, if you give them not presently upon their asking, from blessing they turn to cursing:

sing : So do men secretly do that which Job's Wife advised him to do upon his Affliction, Job 2. 9. *Dost thou still retain thy integrity ? Curse God, and dye.* What a stir, and puling, and waiting, and caring is here ? Cast off all service, be at Daggers-drawing with God. So Mal. 3. 14. *'Tis vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances, or that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of host.* If they have not the benefits they beg, they think God unrighteous, and doth them wrong to withhold from them the favours they imagine they have deserv'd ; and if they have not that recompence when they would, they leave off the serving God any more, as a vain and unprofitable thing. Whereas Love moves upon a sense of Duty, a Natural man that hath an aversion, moves upon a sense of Interest. Love is encouraged by Answer, but is not dissolv'd by Silence ; but a Natural man would have God at his beck, and steers his course in duty by the outward profit, not by the inward pleasure.

This

This Enmity might further be evidenc'd by,

I. *Our Enmity against Christ.*

I.

Many that are *his own*, receive him not, *John* 1. 11. His own by Privileges, to whom he gives Ordinances, and spiritual meat from his Table ; his own by Profession, who profess they have made a Covenant with him, and yet underhand keep up their ancient Agreement with Hell. Professions of Christ are no demonstrations of love to him. We may commend another for his parts and perfections, and yet have a secret grudge against him. All the pretended Love unrenewed men have to Christ, hath no better ground than the *Turks* love to *Mahomet* ; for it hath no higher spring than Education ; and had their Lot been to be born among them, they would have loved *Mahomet* with as warm a Devotion as now they pretend to love Christ ; for they love him not formally, but they love that which they were brought up in the profession of, let it be what it will. This Enmity against Christ reflects upon God himself. Christ tells



tells us often, He was sent by God ! An Affront to an Ambassador, is an injury to the Majesty he represents.

Despising the Embassy of an Angel, is an act of Enmity against God ; much more the despising the Embassy of his own Son.

This is evident in the practices of men.

1. 1. *'Tis hard to convince men of the necessity of Christ.* You see what little fruit Christ himself had by all his preaching among the *Jews*.
2. 2dly. When men are convinc'd, *they endeavour to stifle those Convictions.* We are as untam'd and unruly Heifers, that will not endure the Yoke : They will break those Cords as if they were the most formidable evils, and shake them off from them, as if they were Vipers upon their hands.
3. 3dly. When men cannot stifle their Convictions, *yet they are loth to come to Christ.* John 5. 40. *You will not come to me.* They would bring something of their

their own to him, for they grudge him the Glory of being an entire Saviour ; Or if they do come to Christ, it is for Ease, not for Holiness : for when their Troubles are ceas'd, they return to their Vomit.

4ly. If men do come, *it is a restrain'd Act.* 4,

Men are therefore said to be drawn, and it is the mighty Power of God to bring them. Did not God overpower the Hearts of his People, but leave them to themselves, they would still stand it out in Rebellion against God.

2ly. *Enmity to the Saints.* 2,

When the Devil found God above his reach, he sets himself against the Creatures that were design'd more peculiarly for his Service. Just after we read of Enmity to God in *Adam*, we read of Enmity to the Godly in *Cain*. The *Italians*, when they say *un Cristiano*, commonly mean a Blockhead ; and our common Speech, a *silly Abraham* imports no better : It will be so to the World's end. *Despisers of those that are*  
N good,

good, are rank'd with those that are Enemies to God, 2 *Tim.* 3. 3. It ariseth from a hatred of Holiness it self. And it is Enmity to God; for he that would not suffer him to have a holy Servant, would not suffer him to have a holy Throne, a holy Scepter, a holy Crown, a holy Kingdom. If men hate the Children of Light, they do by consequence hate the Father of Lights. Mr. Cotton was convinc'd of his Enmity against God by his Enmity to the Servants of God.

There are several Causes of this Enmity.

- I. 1. *Diffimilitude between God and a natural Man.*

As Likeness in Nature and Inclinations is a Cause of Love, so Diffimilitude and Unfutableness is a Cause of Hatred. Distance of Manners breeds Alienation of Affection. This Diffimilitude depends also upon the Opposition between the Law, and the Nature of a Sinner, *Rom.* 7. 14. *The Law is spiritual, but I am carnal.* Hence proceeds all that acting against it; for the Apostle saith  
v. 15, 16.

v. 15, 16. *I consent to the law, that it is good* ; but my Flesh, which hath a repugnancy to it, will not comply with it ; the Spiritual Law and the Carnal Heart do quarrel with one and other.

Diffimilitude between God and a natural Man is the greatest,

1. *In respect of Nature.*

1.

God is infinitely holy, Man corrupt and filthy. Darkness and Light, Heaven and Hell are directly contrary ; so is Christ and *Belial*. Let Engagements be what they will, so long as Men are of different Spirits, they cannot agree. As in regenerate Men this diffimilitude works an abhorrency of themselves, as in *Job* ; so in natural Men it engenders a disaffection to God.

2ly. *In respect of Ends.*

2.

There are in God and Men different Ends. Man's End is to please himself, and satisfy the Desires of the Flesh ; God's End is to vindicate his Law, and show himself the Righteous Governor of the World, which cannot be at-



tained without a direct Contrariety to the corrupt End of Man.

The remedy then will be, to get a renew'd Nature, the Image of God new-form'd in the Soul.

2.

2. *Guilt.*

Men fly from God out of shame; they consider the Debts they owe God are great; and naturally Debtors fly from their Creditors, for fear they should exact or demand any thing of them. *Adam's* Guilt was rather attended with a flight from him, than with an approach to him. Those *Israelites* that desir'd God no more to speak to them but by *Moses*, were afraid of his Presence too, when his Face shone with an heavenly Splendor. Terror is essential to Guilt, and Hatred to a perpetual Terror. Their Guilt made them fly from that *Moses* whom they knew to be their friend, when God had set a signal mark upon him. When Men cannot discharge their Judgments of the belief of a strict account, and dreadful Hell, and perpetual Immortality, their Hearts are pierc'd with their Sins like so many Darts.

Darts. As they have a thousand Sins, so they have a thousand Stings; all pointed with God's Wrath, and return'd back with their own Hatred, though it is but the just fruit of their own doings. The frequency of iniquity contracts the more implacable Contrariety to God, and makes them as incapable of any Union to God, as of Repose in themselves.

The Remedy then is, to labour for Justification by the Blood of Christ, which is only able to remove that Guilt which engenders our Hatred.

3ly. *God's crossing the desires and interests of the Flesh.*

3.

Natural qualities encrease with the resistance of their Contraries; so doth Sin. The Duties God doth principally love, do most of all cross our Corruptions; and those are the Duties we hate most. *Sodomites* show most disaffection to *Lot*, when he opposeth them in the Prosecution of their Lusts with the Angels, *Gen. 19. 9. We will deal worse with thee than with them.* Had God (as well as *Micajah* to *Ahab*)

N 3

spoke

spoke good to natural Men in their own Esteem, and held them up in their Lust; his Truth would not be so much imprison'd in unrighteousness, but be highly ador'd with men's choicest Affections; but his commanding things according to his own holy Nature, brings into act that habitual Hatred which was before in the Heart. All Hatred doth arise from an opinion of destructiveness in the Object hated. Why do we loath a thing, but because we imagine it inconsistent with our Happiness and Wishes? And a Sinner being possess'd that his darling Sin is inconsistent with the Holiness of God's Law, hates God for being of a Nature so contrary to that which he loves. The disappointment our corrupt Principles find by any Truth of God, exasperates the Heart. The *Jews* expecting an Earthly Grandeur by the *Messiah*, and that they should be made Lords paramount of the World, was the Cause that they were the more desperate Enemies to Christ when they found his design to be short of their Expectations, and that his Humility favour'd not their Pride, and his Meekness

ness was not like to raise him from the Footstool of the *Roman* Empire to the Throne of the World.

The Remedy then is, To have a high Esteem of the Holiness and Wisdom of the Law of God, and the Advantages he aims at for our good in the enjoyning of it. To account it better than thousands of Gold and Silver. To look upon his Commands as not grievous, 1 *John* 5. 3.

4ly. *Love of Sin.*

The greater the Love of Sin, the more must be our Hatred of God; because the more we love that which hath an Essential Enmity against God, the more we signify that it is our chief Good and Happiness, and consequently we must hate that which is most contrary to it, and would hinder our enjoyment of it: and therefore our hatred of God's Holiness grows up equally with our fondness of Sin.

When by frequent Acts the habitual Nature is strengthen'd, all the Powers of doing contrary is swallow'd up in that habit. Hence it is said, *the carnal*



*mind is enmity to God, i. e.* the sensual mind, when Sensuality hath got the mastery of the mind, and planted sensual habits, there is Enmity to God; and it cannot be subject to the Law of God, because that habit wholly acts the mind. Men's Reasons side with the Precepts of God, and conclude them to be the way to felicity; but the Law of the Mind is too weak for the powerful and pleasing Charms of the Flesh, whereby they are drawn into an imaginary Paradise, but a real Captivity. The hating all the Dictates of God our Saviour is put upon this score. Light must be odious, when Darkness is lovely: God must needs be hated, when his Enemy is most caress'd. As the Love of God in the Godly is the Cause that they hate Sin, so the Love of Sin in the Wicked is the Cause that they hate God. Every Sin being an aversion from God in its own Nature, and a conversion to the Creature, according to the multiplying the Acts of Sin, this aversion from God, and conversion to the Creature, must needs be encreas'd; and by how much the more Love we have

to the Creature, so much the more Love is taken from God.

The Remedy then is, To endeavour for as great a Hatred of Sin as thou hast of God; to look upon Sin as the greatest Evil in it self, the greatest disadvantage to thy Happiness.

5ly. *Injury we do to God.*

It is proper to Men *Odisse quos laeserint*; whereas the person injur'd might rather hate, yet the person injuring hath often the greatest disaffection. *Joseph's* Mistress first wrong'd him, and then hated him. *Saul* first injur'd *David*, and then persecuted him; as if *David* had been the Malefactor, and *Saul* the Innocent. *Italians* have a Proverb to this purpose; *Chisa injuria ne pardonna mai*. The Reason is, because they think the injur'd person must needs hate him; and Love is not an affection due to an Enemy. We have also suspicious thoughts of the person we have provok'd to be our Enemy. We wrong God, and then we hate him; measuring his Affections by humane Passions; and thinking, that because we have wrong'd

wrong'd him, he must needs lay aside all the Goodness and Patience of his own Nature, and watch the first Opportunity of Revenge. Every Sin and Act of it being Enmity to God, the more the habit of any Sin is increas'd by frequent Acts, the more also is the habitual Enmity in the Heart increas'd: For as every Sin hath an immediate tendency to the supply of some Lust, so it hath a remote and principal tendency to the encrease of that Enmity. *Cain* first affronts God in his Omniscience and Providence, and then departs from his Presence; turns his back upon him, and becomes the head of the prophane part of the World, *Gen. 4. 16.* *The presence of the Lord, i. e.* from all the Ordinances of God, and Communion with him in Worship.

The Remedy then is, To endeavour a Conformity to God's holy Will; to think with thy self every Morning, What shall I do this day to please God? what Duty doth he require of me? The more thou dost obey his Will, the more thou will love his Holiness.

6ly. *Slavish*

6ly. *Slavish fear of God.*

6.

Men are apt to fear a just Recompence for an injury done to another, that he will do him one ill turn for another; and Fear is the Mother of Hatred. God being Man's superior, and wrong'd by him, there follows necessarily a slavish Fear of him, and his Power; and such a Fear makes wrathful and imbitter'd Thoughts of God, while he considers God arm'd with an unconquerable and irresistible Power to punish him. 'Tis as natural for a man to hate that which he conceives to be against him, as for any Animal to hate that whose Acts it fears do tend to a dissolution of its Being. The Devils tremble, James 2. 19. *φείσονται*; they have a great Horror, and their Enmity is as great as their Fear; nay, heightned by their Fear, because they have no hopes of pardon; they do their utmost to oppose God, and have Companions in Misery: 'Tis impossible a man should love God, while he is apprehended as an irreconcilable Adversary. The stronger the Impressions of Fear, the quicker



quicker the Inclinations to Hatred. But when the Evil fear'd begins to strike, it makes the Hatred shoot out in Volleys of Curses and Blasphemies, which is evident in the damn'd. God consider'd as a Judge, is the Object not of comforting, but terrifying Faith ; No man can naturally love that Judge which he thinks will condemn him. A fear of God as an inexorable Judge, that we have highly wrong'd, will nourish an enmity against him.

The Remedy then is, Be much in Communion with God ; strangeness is the Mother of Fear ; we dread Men sometimes, because we know not their disposition. The Beasts themselves delight in the Company of Man, when being familiariz'd to him ; they fancy his disposition, and taste his kindness to them, which when they were unacquainted with, they would fly from his Presence with the greatest speed. Study the reconciling-Love of God in the Gospel ; Consider much the loveliness and amiableness of his Nature, his ardent Desire thou wouldest be his friend more than his enemy. A Cause  
of

of our hating God, is our ignorance of him; for if we did but know how good he is, how merciful to Man, and to us; if we would but leave our Sin, we could not possibly hate him.

7ly. *Pride.*

7.

Self-denial is absolutely against the Pride of Reason; and this is the first Lesson God teacheth us. 'Tis the first Letter in the Alphabet of the Gospel of Peace, and therefore we are against him. Men lift up the Pride of Reason against the Truth of God, and the Pride of Heart against the Will of God. Hence it appears, that Self is the great Incendiary of the Soul against God. The Enmity of *Tyre* against God is charg'd upon this foot of account, *Ezek.* 28. 2. *Thy heart is lifted up in the midst of the sea; thou hast set thy heart as the heart of God.* She would rather have her Wisdom admir'd by God, than God's Wisdom admir'd by her. The sharpest Enmities in the World are founded upon this Vice. This makes the greatest Combustions in Commonwealths. Men fear to be overtopp'd  
by

by one another. All other Vices desire Companions. A Drunkard loves his Good-fellows ; he cares not to swill alone. An unclean person must have his Mate. Swearers hate those that come not up to their own pitch ; but a proud Man would have none keep an equal pace with him : He cannot endure a Companion, but would have all others under his feet. Pride is naturally against God ; and therefore Sin is often call'd a lifting up of the Heart against God, a hardening the Heart against him.

The Remedy then is, To endeavour after Humility. Study the Humility of God, who is more humble to us than we can be to him. Reflect more upon thy Vileness than thy Worth.

8.

8ly. *Love of the World.*

The greater dearness of sensual pleasures, the further our divorce from God. The Love of the World is inconsistent with the Love of God, 1 John 2. 15. *If any man love the World, the love of the Father is not in him.* It puts us under an impossibility while that Love

re-

remains, to entertain the Spirit of Truth, Joh. 14. 17. *The spirit of truth whom the World cannot receive.* Whosoever will be a friend of the World, is an enemy to God. The Friendship of the World is enmity with God, Jam. 4. 4. *Ye adulterers, know you not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Know you not:* 'Tis an unquestionable Truth, your own Consciences cannot be strangers to it. Indulgence to Carnal interests and pleasures mounts up to a fierceness against God, Deut. 32. 15. *Jesurun waxed fat, and kick'd.* The Wisdom of the Flesh is first *earthly*, then *sensual*, then *devilish*; When once the Mind is possess'd by an earthly and sensual Temper, it will not be long before it grows up to devilishness, and you know that can be no friend of God. What begins in Earthliness, Earthly Principles and Ends, and proceeds on to Sensuality, will end in Devilishness both principle and practice. Whosoever loves his own Pleasure and Voluptuousness, must needs hate whatsoever is contrary to it, and would destroy it: This is the great Root of Anger, revenge in Man, and our contempt of God. The



The Remedy then is, To look upon the World with scorn, to think the Soul above it; and that the Contentments and Pleasures of the World are fitter for Beasts, and at best but Accommodations for thee as a Traveller, not a fit Pillow to repose thy Soul on. Despise the World, and the Devil hath scarce any bait and argument left to move thee to an estrangedness from, and an enmity against God.

Now if all the Saints that ever were should meet together in a Synod, to consult of the truth of this Proposition, That the heart of Man is enmity against God, they would all bear witness to it *Nemine contradicente*; and he that denies it, I may confidently affirm, did never seriously read the Scripture, or cast one practical glance upon his own heart.

### U S E.

I. I *Information.*

I. *How desperate is the Atheism in every man's heart by Nature? What a Mass of Villany is in the heart of Man? What!*

What! to make God no God? set up our Wills against the Will of God? When we say an enemy to God, we must conceive all that may denominate a man base and abominable. What more can be added, than to say, Such a man is an enemy to Love it self? Sin and God are at direct odds. To harbour a Traytor in a house after Proclamation, is a Capital Crime, and comes under the Charge of High-Treason. What then is the harbouring of Sin against God, but involving thy self in the same Rebellion which every Sin includes in its own nature?

This Enmity to God hath this aggravation in it, That it cannot upon any account whatsoever be just.

God himself cannot command a Creature not to love him; before he can command this, he must change his Nature, cashier his Loveliness, cease to be the chief Good. God cannot command any thing unjust; but this is intrinsically unjust, eternally unjust, Not to love that which is infinitely amiable. It had been unjust to command an Act of the highest disingenuity and ingratitude,

O

7

titude, to hate the Author of our Mercies. It had been against the Original Nature of a rational Creature, to be an enemy to that which is its chiefest Good. Our loving God doth not arise meerly from the Command of God enjoying it, but from the Nature of God, and the Creatures relation to him. None but will confess, that had God never commanded us to love him, it had been highly abominable for a Creature to hate his Maker and Benefactor: Therefore in the Moral Law or Decalogue, the Love of God is not explicitly commanded, but suppos'd as a fundamental and indispensable Principle; from whence all other Commands are necessary Consequences: So that this Enmity against God is not only against his Command, but against his very Nature, and against the fundamental and indispensable Principle of all God's Commands, and all the Duties which as rational Creatures we owe to God.

The desperateness of this Natural Enmity will appear,

- I. I. In that *'tis as bad, and in some respects worse than Atheism.* We complain much

much, and not without Cause of the growing Atheism of the times; but we shall find as bad and worse than we complain of in our own Nature, and the practices of Men. *Mirandula* saith, a Speculative Atheist is the most prodigious Monster in the World, but a Practical. An Atheist that denies the Being of God, doth not so much affront him, as a natural Man that owns his Being, but walks as if there were no God; as if he were not a just and righteous God; as if he made use of his Sovereign Power to make Laws for the prejudice of his Creature.

1. *The Atheist barely denies God's Being, the other mocks him, Jer. 32. 33. They have turn'd to me the back, and not the face.* This puts a slight upon him, turning the back upon him, which is an act of disdain, as if God were the most contemptible Being in the World. Thou that turnest thy face to thy Dog, thy Beast, the Devil, usest God with more contempt than thou dost thy Dog, thy Swine, thy Ox, thy Ass, yea the Devil himself. The Atheist that denies  
O 2
God's
- 1.



God's Being, and yet walks according to Moral Principles, is like the Son in the Gospel, that told his Father he would not go, and yet did ; which Christ commends above the other, which acknowledged his Father's authority to command him, and pretended a readiness to obey, but answer'd not his Acknowledgments by the performance of his Duty.

A prophane Man, or a Hypocrite, is more an Atheist than one that professeth himself so, in-as much as Actions, and a continual Succession and Circle of them, makes a greater discovery of the Principles of the Heart, than the Motions of the Tongue. Would not that man, who in his belief of a Deity, doth things which fall under the Censure of God's Justice, and contrary to his Law, and odious among Men, though not punishable by Man, do things far worse, did not the fear of Laws, the anger of his Prince, the pain and disgrace of Punishment restrain him ? Surely he would : For that Principle which carries him against his Reason and profess'd Religion in his practices against God,

would

would hurry him further, were there not some powerful Limits set to him by human Laws.

Now what doth this evince, but that he honours Man more than God, fears Man more than God, obeys Man more than God, owns the Power of Man more than the Power of God, which he pretends to acknowledge and believe.

2ly. *The Atheist denies God's Being, the other his Authority.*

2.

And in denying his Authority, ver-  
tually denies his Being : for it is a con-  
tradiction to be God, and not to be So-  
veraign. Doth not Man imply, by the  
breaking God's Laws, that he would  
not have God act as a Sovereign ; that  
he would have him but a careless God,  
an unholy and unrighteous God in gi-  
ving him the Reins, and not prohibiting  
by holy Laws any Wickedness his heart  
is inclin'd unto ? What then would be-  
come of God's Being ? His Deity can-  
not outlive the life of his Authority and  
Righteousness. If he ceas'd to be a  
righteous Lawgiver, and a holy Main-  
tainer of his Laws, he would cease to

be a God. So that every Breach of the Law is a virtual deposing him from his supreme Government, and consequently a virtual deposing him from his Deity.

2. 2ly. *This Enmity is of the same nature with the Devil's Enmity.*

'Tis not indeed in the present state wherein Man is so intense, because his is direct, Man's implicit. But yet,

1. 1. *Natural Men have a Diabolical Nature.*

There are but two Seeds, the Seed of the Woman, and that of the Serpent; two Natures, the Divine and Diabolical. Satan is the Father of Wicked Men, and Fathers derive their Nature to their Children. He is not their Father by Creation, nor by Generation, but by a diffusion of his Principles into them, *Joh. 8. 44. You are of your Father the Devil.* God made Man in Creation according to his own Image; and the Devil quickly by Corruption brings him into his own Likeness. In Scripture is not meant by the Devil only a particular Person,

Person, but a Nature : So Christ intimates in his Rebuke to *Peter*, Matth. 16. 23. *Get thee behind me, Satan.*

*Peter*, an eminent Apostle, who had a little before, v. 16, 17. made an illustrious profession of Christ being the Son of God, is now call'd Devil ; not because he was really the person of the Devil, but the Devil's nature did then exert it self in him : for that advice proceeded not from a divine, but diabolical Disposition ; for it made directly for the serving the Devil's Kingdom, which was only to be overthrown by the death of Christ. Hell it self could not produce a more devilish result of its deepest Counsels, than the advice which *Peter* now gave, which would highly have promoted the interest of Hell. And do but observe the reason why Christ calls him Satan, v. 23. *Thou savourest not the things which be of God, &c.* The things of God, and the things of Man, and favouring the things of God, and the things of Man, are set in opposition ; and a man that savours not the things of God, but the things of Man, such a man and Satan are all one and



the same in the account of Christ. So by Christ sometimes is not meant a particular Person, but a Nature, *Col. 1. 27. Christ in you the hope of glory.* What in one place is call'd the *divine Nature*, is by *Paul* call'd Christ; not the Person of Christ, but the Nature of Christ; *i. e.* that spiritual Principle of Grace or new Nature, which is an Earnest of your future Inheritance, and so a ground of *Hope*.

A natural man is wholly Carnal, *Rom. 7. 18.* There is *no good thing* dwells in him, no good Principle; it may lodge a while, but it hath no settled abode; and what is not good, is of the Devil. As God is the author of all Good, so is the Devil of all Moral Evil. So that a natural Man is wholly Diabolical.

2. 2dly. *Every natural Man is a Friend to the Devil.*

There are but Two Sovereigns in the World, One Rightful, and the other Usurping. If we are Enemies to the right Sovereign, we must be Friends to the Usurper; if Enemies to God,

God, Friends to the Devil. He works in the Children of Disobedience, Eph. 2. 2, 3. Not by force, but by consent: For he works in them according to the desires of the Flesh, which the Apostle implies v. 3. *Fulfilling the desires of the Flesh.* If the love of the World be enmity to God, Jam. 4. 4. *The Friendship of the World is Enmity with God,* then Enmity to God must needs be a love of the Devil; Enmity to God implying a Friendship with every thing that hath the same disposition against him. The love of the World, *i.e.* of the Sin and Unrighteousness of the World, doth necessarily include virtually love of the God of the World, which is the Devil's Title, 2 Cor. 4. 4. And so a Man adores Satan as a God, in loving that World the Devil is the God of; that wickedness the Devil is the Head of, above God. *Rebellion against God is called a Covenant with Death, and an Agreement with Hell, Isa. 28. 18.* (not with the punishments, but principles of Hell); And being a Friend to the Devil, he must needs be a Friend to the

the grand design of the Devil, 14. *Isa.* 12, 13, 14, and *v.* 4. was spoke of the King of *Babylon*. The knot of Friendship in the World is some particular Man's design, which both Friends agree in, and drive on. Now his design seems to be affecting the Throne and Authority of God: for God threatening the King of *Babylon*, and in him, as the Type, the great Antichrist, compares him to Lucifer, who was not content with his station as a Subject, but would mount into the Chair of the Supreme Power.

3. 3dly. *Thy Enmity against God is in some respect as much, in regard of the actual effects of it, as the Devils is, though not in regard of disposition.*

We declare our Enmity as far as we can: We cannot pull God out of Heaven; we cannot nail Christ to the Cross again, and pierce his Heart; we cannot rail at him to his Face as the *Jews* did; but the despising his Laws, disowning his Power granted by Heaven over us, is the only thing we can do against him; and this we do as  
much

much as we can, as much as the gripes of Conscience and our interest in the World will give us leave. We virtually deprive him of that which was the reward of his Sufferings, *viz.* his Power, of the design of his Sufferings, *viz.* the Propagation of his Evangelical Law in our Heart. And he that would destroy the dearest things God and Christ have left in the World, and that which he gave the greatest charge for the preservation of, would act all the Villanies against the person of Christ as well as against what he had in the world, and against the Essence of God, were it in his power; Thou dost as much in this, as the Devil can do. The being of God and the Person of Christ are above his reach as well as ours. All that he can do is to trample upon his Laws, and lift others in rebellion against God, and in this thou dost comply with him. He can do no more, and thou dost as much.

4thly. *'Tis a worse Enmity than is in Hell.* This Enmity is more disingenuous than that in Hell.

Our



Our hatred of God is worse than that of the Damned, they despairingly hate him under the inevitable and unavoidable strokes of Justice, thou hatest him while thou art hedged in with the expressions of his Goodness.

They hate him under vials of Wrath, and we under showers of Mercy; they in terrour of Damnation, and we under the sense of Kindness. They hate him because he inflicts what is Hurtful, and we because he commands what is Profitable and Holy. Our hatred of God is worse than the Devil's hatred of him. We hate God, who contrived our Redemption, and sent his Son to accomplish it; The Devils had not those obligations laid upon them. Christ came not for them, nor shed his Blood for their recovery. They hate their Creator, but we our Creator and Redeemer too. The Devils hate him that came to torment them and destroy their Works, we hate him that came to Bless us, and save our Souls.

2 Information.

2.

*God is the greatest Evil in the account of every natural Man.*

If there be in us a greater enmity to God and his Law than to any thing else, it implies that we think him the greatest Evil, and the worst of Beings. Evil, and not Good, is the object of Hatred. As Love is the propension of the mind to some thing as good, so Hatred is an an alienation of the mind from some thing as evil, either really, or supposedly\*. We cannot possibly hate good as good, as we cannot possibly love evil as evil. Now nothing but Sin is absolutely evil, and therefore nothing but Sin should be the absolute object of our hatred. But seeing that Love which should be set upon God, is set upon Sin, and that Hatred which should have only Sin for its object, pitches upon God as its object, 'tis hence clear, that we account Sin the highest Good, and God the greatest Evil. Though a Man doth not hate God as God, yet there being more of his hatred spent against  
God

\*Plutarch's  
Morals, p.  
536, 537.

God than against any thing else, it is most certain that God is virtually accounted by us the most detestable being. Do we offend any so much as we do God? Do we love the Prosecution of any thing which is distasteful to Man, as we do that which is an abomination to God? Is there any thing in the World we do more rejoice in, than that whereby God is prejudiced? Is there any thing we do love and pursue with greater Violence, than that which is hateful and injurious to him? Are we so absolutely contrary to any Man, any Creature in our natural inclinations, dispositions, affections, and desires, as unto God? Is it not clearly manifest by our inward and outward Carriage, that we imply, that God is the greatest Evil, and we rank him who is unchangeably good, in the place of Sin, which is unchangeably bad. As Love is carried out in desire for the object Beloved, so Hatred is a flight from it. As Love is accompanied with joy at the presence of a beloved Object, so is Hatred attended with a Detestation. Are  
we

we not naturally more desirous of opportunities of Sin, than opportunities of Service to our Maker? Are we ever so cheerful in the presence of God, and Communion with him in Religious Services, as in our Sports, Recreations, and Sinful Practises? What then hath most of our Love, what do we account our supreme Happiness, and our worst Misery?

3. *Information.*

*It justifies God in his Acts of punitive justice.*

3.

1st. *In his severest judgments in the World.*

1.

Who can blame God for his severities against those that hate him, especially after riches of forbearance? Consider Man as his desperate Enemy, and you may more admire his Clemency, than accuse his Justice. You may wonder that he doth not destroy the whole stock of Mankind, as well as send some few drops and Hailstones of Judgment upon the World. We may rather stand amazed at his  
Pati-



Patience that he suffers such creatures to live, than murmur at his Judgments, for not a day but we commit many acts which manifest this Hatred. For as all actions truly good partake of the nature of Love to the chiefest good ; so all unworthy actions which are at a distance from God the chief end, are marshall'd by, and tainted with that enmity which lurks in the Soul. 'Tis equal God should be a Judge to condemn, where he is rejected as a Sovereign to rule.

2. *2dly. It Justifies God in his Judgments upon Infants.*

Indeed we call Infants Innocent, and we are startled at the pain and sufferings of Babes ; but this Doctrine is a sufficient Curb to any Accusations of God in such Proceedings. Do we not kill Vipers and noxious Creatures in the Nest ? Infants are endued with an Inimical and Hostile Nature against God, though they exert it not by reason of the weakness of their Organs.

If Death reign'd over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's Transgression, Rom. 5. 14. Enmity surely reign'd over them. The Frost which by Congealing a Viper, suspends its motion, doth not expel its natural Venom, ( which it hath in as great a quantity as the liveliest ) tho' at present it binds up the activity of it, which will shew it self when outward impediments are removed by Heat. Neither doth the inability of Infants exercising this Enmity, discharge their Nature from an unconceivable mass of it ; nay, you may perceive some starts of it even in them ; Did you never see Envy, Passion, Sensuality in an Infant ? We may more wonder that God doth not dash them in pieces at their first appearance in the World, as we do young Wolves and Ravenous Creatures, than that he should use his right over them for their Original Pravity, and take them out of the World.

3dly. *It justifies the eternity of Punishment.*

3.

P

Who

Who can charge God with Injustice, for punishing eternally a creature who doth eternally hate him; to keep that person in being to his everlasting damage, that doth wish, and if it were in his power, would accomplish the destruction of God himself? Can any Punishment be too hard, any duration of it too long for him that is an Enemy to the best of beings? to one infinitely Good, and therefore disingenuous; to one infinitely Powerful, and therefore intolerably foolish.

4.

#### 4. Information.

*What an admirable prospect may we take here of God's Patience? With what astonishment may we review all the former as well as the present Age of God's forbearance towards Men! That he should preserve such a crew of disingenuous Monsters, as we all naturally are! Rom 2. 4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering? Had he not had riches of goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering, and infinite Riches too, the Enmity of Man against him had exhausted*

exhausted all before this time; and being the riches of goodness as well as long-suffering, it makes our Enmity appear the blacker. A Grain of goodness is no fit object for hatred; much less riches of it. How many Millions of such haters of him, breathe every day in his air, are maintained by his bounty, have their tables spread, and their cups filled to the brim, and that in the maddest of their reiterated belchings out of this Enmity against him, under sufficient provocations, to the highest indignation?

\* 5. *Information.*

Hence we see *the root of all Sin in the World.*

5.

What is the reason Men Row against the Stream of their own Consciences? What is the reason Men of sublimated Reason, and clear natural Wisdom, are voluntary Slaves to their own Lusts, which they serve with as delightful, as disgraceful a Drudgery against the light of their own Minds? 'Tis from this contrariety to God, seated in their very Nature, they could never else so earnestly,



nestly, so chearfully do the Devil's Work before God's. They could never else be deaf to the loud Voice of God, and have their Ears open to the least whisper of Satan. Whence proceeds our Stupidity, the folly of our Thoughts, the levity of our Minds, the deadness of our Affections, the sleepiness of our Souls, our inexcusable carelesness in Holy Duties, more than any thing of a Temporal Concern, but from this Aversion from God! 'Tis this Enmity dulls our Heart in any Service. Though Conscience which is in us, to keep up the interest of God's Law, spurs us on to Duty, yet Sin that is within us, that keeps up the quarrel against Heaven, hinders us from it, or diverts us in it.

#### *6. Information.*

Hence follows *the Necessity of Regeneration.*

This division between God and his Creature will not admit of any union without a change of Nature. The carnal mind, as such, can never be reconciled to God before this be wrought. The old frame must be demolished,  
and

and a new one reared: for a change of State cannot be without a change of Nature. 'Tis impossible that this Nature, so corrupt and contrary, can ever be reconcil'd to the pure and holy Nature of God; what communion hath Light with Darkness? We must be God's Friends, before we can be Sin's Enemies; the root of bitterness must be taken away, habitual Corruption remov'd, the Heart will never else stand right as a Compass towards Heaven. Who can ever fight against his Nature? No Man will ever resist the Devil without a change; we cannot without the rooting out this Enmity, make a profitable approach to God. What expectation canst thou have of a good look from him, when thou comest to him with all thy natural Hatred of him? How canst thou dare to come to him, who knows every circumstance of thy Enmity better than thou dost thy Name, and is so well acquainted with thy Heart? What hopes can you have of any answer from him? If we bring our wickednesses with us to *Gilgal*, the

place of Worship, even there in the solemnest Duties will God hate us, *Hos. 9. 15. All their wickedness is in Gilgal, for there I hated them.* If the mind be fill'd with hostile principles against the purity of God's commands, it must be unexperienced and unactive to every good work, *Tit. 1. ult. To every good work reprobate.* If the Head be sick, needs must the Heart be faint. If the counselling-faculty be false, cursed must be all its advice.

7.

## 7. Information.

*That is not Grace which doth not alter Nature.*

Morality therefore is not Grace, because it doth not change Nature; if it did, many of the Heathens were as near to God as the best of Christians; whatsoever may be done by the strength of Nature, cannot alter it; for no Nature can change it self. Poyson may be great within the Skin, like to a Viper's, be we never so speckled with a Reformation. Freedom from gross Sins argues not a friendship to God. None were so great Enemies

to

to Christ as the Pharisees, to whom Christ gives no better a Title, than that of the Devil's Children, and charges them with the hatred both of himself and his Father, *Joh. 15. 24.* The Enmity may be the greater under a zealous and devout Morality. The poor Publicans crowded in to Christ, while the self-righteous Jews derided him, and rejected the counsel of God, *Luk. 7. 30. Act. 13. 46.* and put the word of God from them. 'Tis a foolish thing for men to boast of their own Heart, or outward conformity; thou canst not tell how soon that heart thou braggest of, may boil out its Enmity. The Plant which is pleasant to the Eye, may be poyson to the Stomach. Boast not therefore of thy glossy Morality, thy checquered Skin, so long as there is a venom in thy Nature. Whatsoever excellencies a Natural Man hath, are all tainted with this poison, his Wisdom, Learning, Moral Virtue, and are rather aggravations than excuses.

*8. Information.*

Hence follows the *Necessity of applying thy self to Christ.*

P 4

As

8.



As there is a necessity of a change of Nature in us, because our Enmity to God is a Moral Enmity ; so there is a necessity of a compensation and satisfaction to God for the preservation of God's honour, because it is an unjust Enmity, not rising from any injury that ever God did to us; And because his Enmity to us, provoked by our disaffection to him, is a legal Enmity, his Law violated must be satisfied. Our Enmity is unjust, and therefore must be parted with ; God's Enmity against us is just, and therefore must be removed by a Satisfaction. And since we are unable to give God a compensation for our Wrongs, we must have recourse by Faith to that Blood which hath given him a complete satisfaction. 'Tis Christ only that satisfies God for us, by the shedding of his Blood, and removes our Enmity by the operation of his Spirit.

9.

## 9. Information.

See hence the reason of the difficulty of Conversion, and the little success the Gospel hath.

All

All the Words in the World will not change Nature; Men strive against the Spirit, and will not come under the power of it if they might have their own will. Can you by Exhortations ever reconcile a Wolf and a Lamb? Can you by rational Arguments new-mould the nature of a fierce Lion, or by moral discourses stop the Tide of the Sea? Though Man be a rational Creature, yet corrupt Habits in him answer to meer Nature in them, and sway, and Tide us as much against God. Grave discourses can never set a Man straight that is born crooked. 'Tis no easy thing for the Heart of Man, possessed so long by this cursed principle, to surrender it self upon God's Summons; Men are not so easily reconciled, when the hatred hath been hereditary in the Family; this hath been of as long a standing, within a few Hours, as *Adam* himself. To turn to God in ways of Righteousness, is contrary to the stream of corrupt Nature, and therefore it must be overpowered by a flood of Almighty Grace, as the stream of the River is by the Tide of the Sea.

10. *Infor-*

10.

## 10. Information.

If there be such an Enmity against the Sovereignty of God in the Heart of Man, this shows us *the excellency of Obedience.*

'Tis the endeavour of the Creature, as much as in him lies, to exalt God, to keep him upon his Throne, to preserve the Scepter in his Hand, and the Crown upon his Head. As Faith is a setting a Seal to the truth of God, so is Obedience a setting a Seal to the Dominion of God, and subscribing to the righteousness thereof. 'Tis called a Confirmation of God's Law, an Affection to the Honour of it, *Deut. 27. 26. Cursed be him that confirms not all the words of this law, to do them.* 'Tis an establishing it, as a standing infallible rule, and consequently an Establishing the Law-giver, and an applause to the righteousness of his Government. God being the highest perfection, and infinitely good, therefore whatsoever Rule he gives the Creature, must be good and amiable, or else it cannot proceed from

from God. A base and vile thing can never proceed from that which is only excellent. An unreasonable thing can never proceed from that which is altogether Reason and Regular; therefore the obedience to God's Law is an acknowledging the excellent Goodness, Love, Wisdom, Righteousness of the Law-giver, and a bearing witness to it in the face of the World.

The Second Use is for *Examination*.

2.

Examine your selves by those Demonstrations laid down in the First Part, Whether this Enmity be prevalent in you or no? 1. Have you yet a stoutness of Heart against hearing the Law of God, which crosses the desires of the Flesh? 2. Are you unwilling to be determin'd by divine Injunctions? 3. Doth your Heart swell most against those Laws which are most Spiritual, and which God doth most strictly urge? 4. Do you fall out, and quarrel with your own Consciences, when they press upon you any Command of God? 5. Do you countenance that Law in your Members, that Law of Sin, in opposition to the



the Law of your Mind? 6. Are you willing to be at more pains and expence to violate God's Law, than to observe it, and preserve the honour of it? 7. Do you perform things materially Righteous, because of the Agreeableness of them to your humour and constitution, out of respect to your Reputation, or, which is worse, out of an affection to some base Lust and carnal End, or out of a slavish Fear of God? 8. Are the Laws of Men more valued and fear'd by you than the Laws of God? Do you more readily obey them? 9. Are you desirous and diligent in the drawing Men from compliance with God's Laws, to be your Companions in any Sin you are addicted unto? 10. Do you take pleasure in the affronts Men offer to God, and make them the matter of your sport and jollity? So much as you find of this Temper in any of your Souls, so much of Enmity there is.

3. The Third Use is for *Exhortation to Sinners.*

I. Lay

1. *Lay down thy Arms against God.*

I.

How can you hear these things without saying, Lord deliver me from this Nature. Oh! what should I be an enemy to so good a God? Did God put Enmity between the Seed of the Woman, and the Seed of the Serpent? and shall I put an Enmity between God and my Soul, and a Love between my Heart and the Serpent? Shall I change this Promise of God, and make my dearest Affections embrace the Serpent's Seed, and refuse God himself? Lay down thy Cudgels, strip thy self, yield thy self to him upon his own terms. How canst thou sit down at rest in hating God, and being hated by him? While thou art in thy Natural condition, thou canst not be a friend to God: For *they that are in the flesh, cannot please him, Rom. 8. 8.* How can two walk together, unless they be agreed? We must change our Enmity into Friendship if ever we would be happy. We must accept of his terms, to be at peace with him, or feel the bitter fruits of his powerful Justice. We may pronounce in the

the Presence of God, That if we henceforward endeavour not to get out of a Natural state, it is a resolute maintaining the War against Heaven.

2.      2. *Lament this Enmity, and be humbled for it.*

If there be a common ingenuity, it will make thee tremble to think of thy hatred of Mercy it self. Every Sin is a branch of this Enmity, and doth contribute to the encrease of it, as Acts strengthen Habits, and as every part of the Sea, according to its quantity and strength, contributes to the roaring and violent Irruptions of it. We have robb'd God; for as much Obedience as we have given to the Flesh, we have taken from God: Therefore rise as high as the Fountain in your Humiliations; and lie low, not for a particular Sin only, but for that Enmity in thy Nature, which is the root of all the Sins thou ever didst act. The Evil in our Actions is transient; but there is a perfect and overflowing Fulness of Evil in thy Nature to animate a thousand Acts of the same kind; as the habit of Love

to God resident in the Soul, can command and spirit a thousand Acts with its own Nature.

4thly. *The Fourth Use of Exhortation.*

4.

1. *To Regenerate persons*, such as by the powerful working of the Grace of God, and the over-ruling Hand of the Spirit, have been brought out of this state of Enmity. Besides those things which you may gather from the former Informations, as to grow up in all the parts of the New Creature, to further and advance that Regenerate Work in your Soul: To make frequent Applications of the Blood of Christ, and to have your Heart lifted up in the Ways of God, and Obedience to him, thereby to bear witness to Christ, the Righteousness of God in his Administrations in the World: Let me advise to these things.

1. *Possess your Hearts with great Admirations of the Grace of God towards you, in wounding this Enmity in your Hearts, and changing your State.*

1.

The



The Apostle winds up our Admirations of the Love of Christ upon this Peg, *Rom. 5. 10. When we were enemies, we were reconcil'd to God by the death of his Son ; much more being reconcil'd, we shall be sav'd by his life.* Our Salvation from Sin by Regeneration, is the fruit of his Resurrection and Life, as our Salvation from the Guilt of Sin by Satisfaction was the fruit of his Death: And not only so, saith he, *v. 11. But we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we now receive the atonement.* This Reconciliation of us being the fruit of the first Promise, of breaking the Serpent's Head, *Gen. 3. 15. i. e.* The projects and designs of the Devil, to set God and Man at eternal Variance, makes it the more admirable: That as soon as Man had immediately after his Creation, and being made Lord of the rest of the sublunary Creatures, cast off his Lord and Creator, that just at that time, under the present sense of that unworthy Slight, he should be laying about for the good of fallen Man, and make a promise for the dissolving this Enmity, and change this  
 Resi-

Resistance of God into a more Righteous one; *viz.* A Variance with, and an eternal Enmity against the Serpent.

And hath not this been the Case of some of our Souls, that God hath grappled with us, and chang'd the Current of our Wills, even at the very time of the spitting out our venomous disaffection against him? It was *Paul's* Case, and the Case of many, I am sure, since that time: If such a Circumstance as this did attend thy first Conversion, it should methinks enlarge thy Notes, and wind up thy Astonishments to a higher pitch. But howsoever it be, change your Complaints into Praises for your Deliverance, though it be as yet imperfect. A lively and warm sense of it would quicken thy Obedience, and spirit thee more in the ways of God than all thy Complaints can do. 'Tis to the Grace of God that we owe the decays of it. 'Tis a particular assisting Grace that keeps it down, and binds it up at any time. If we are sometimes without considerable disturbances by it, it is not for want of the Will of the Flesh, nor for want of Strength enough in the  
Q Flesh,

Flesh, even in the best of Men, but it is stak'd down, and stopt by the powerful Operation of the Spirit, and the working of irresistible Grace. To this purpose often reflect upon your former State; it will set a Gloss upon the Grace of God. The more disingenuous our Enmity was, the more illustrious will it make the Love of God to appear in our eye.

2. 2dly. Endeavour to hate Sin as much as thou hast hated God.

What reason have we to bewail ourselves? None of us have ever yet hated Sin so much, as naturally we have hated God. Turn this Affection now as much upon thy great Enemy, as thou hast done upon thy best Friend. The deeper gashes thou hast given to God, Christ, and his Glory, the wider wounds, the harder blows, the sharper stabs give to thy Sin. Have as great an animosity against it, as you have had stoutness of heart against God. Come not under the power of any one: Lift up thy hand most against Spiritual Sins: Shew no Obedience to the Law of Sin in thy Members.

3dly.

3dly. *Enflame thy Love to God* by all the Considerations thou canst possibly muster up. Outdo thy former disaffection by a greater ardency of Love. Sincerely aim at his Glory. Eye his Command only in every thing thou dost. Delight to please him above thy self. Endeavour by all means to draw others to think well of him, and be at peace with him. Take pleasure in thy conversion of others to him. Rejoice at any Glory he gains in the World. The unjust Enmity he receives from others, should procure a greater respect from us to God. Oh that we could make up by an intenseness of Love, the injury he receives by the enmity of others, and ballance their Hatred by an increase of our Affection! Oh that we could delight our selves in him, as much as we have been displeased with him! That he might be as dear to us, as he is odious to Devils; and that the Devils themselves, in the degrees of their detestation of God, might not outstrip us in the degrees of our affection to him.

Q 2

4thly. Be-



4. 4thly. *Bewail this Enmity.*

Are the best of us perfect? Are we stript of all reliques of it? Has any man on Earth put off the dregs of the Flesh, and commenc'd an Angel in Purity? Have we got the start of all the Saints of old, and expell'd it wholly out of us? Have we outstript the great Apostle, who complain'd of Sins dwelling in his Flesh? Is there no more need of Groans to be deliver'd from this body of death? Ah! what reliques are there? Doth not the best Man find it a laborious Undertaking, to engage against the Remainders of Nature in him, and to manage a constant and open hostility against the force of the Sensual Appetite, and the Spiritual Wickedness in the high places of his Soul, though much wounded by the Grace of God? 'Tis this gasping body of death in a Regenerate man that gives life to those swarms of imperfections in his Religious Duties. 'Tis this that cripples our Obedience; that shackles our Feet, when they should run the Ways of God's Commandments. 'Tis this drags away our Heart  
after

after unworthy Objects, in the midst of those Services wherein we attempt the nearest approaches to God. 'Tis upon the score of this lurking Principle in us, that we may charge all the foils we suffer in our strongest Wrestlings for Heaven. And is not this Cause enough to bewail it? One great Ingredient in any day's Repentance, is an acknowledgment of the due demerit of Sin, and the Righteousness of God in his Threatnings and Punishment; and this must be the ground the abhorrency our Souls naturally have to his Statutes, *Levit. 26. 43. They shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity; i. e. They shall repent of it, and acknowledge my Righteousness in it, because, even because: And v. 40. they were to confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their Fathers, i. e. the iniquity deriv'd from their Fathers; for their actual Sins are express'd by the trespass they trespassed against God. Are there not daily Starts of this Nature in us? Do we not need a daily Pardon for it? and is it for God's honour to pardon us without an humble Acknowledgment? 'Tis the greatest part of our*

Q 3

Enmity

Enmity that we are not more affected with it. Our breaking God's Commands, is not so much as the inherent contempt of God in us; a man may receive injuries from another, and lightly pass them over, when he knows the person hath no disaffection to him. It was not so much the act of Adultery and Murther that *Nathan* by God's Commission charges so home upon *David*, as his despising God's Commands, and despising God himself, 2 Sam. 12. 9. *Wherefore hast thou despised the command of the Lord?* and v. 10. *Thou hast despised me.* And it is not so much our actual breaches, as our natural and indwelling contempt of God, that is most chargeable upon us in our approaches to him, and exercises of our Repentance before him. If a likeness to *Adam's Sin* be made a ground of the aggravation of actual Sin, *Hos. 6. 7.* *But they like men have transgress'd*; implying that to be the greatest; then the Corruption of Nature we deriv'd from him by the means of that Sin, must be the highest and most lamented.

5thly. Watch

*thly, Watch against the daily Exertings and Exercises of this Enmity.*

5.

When we would be serious in the concerns of God and our own Souls, Do we not feel some inward Assaults against our own Resolutions, and some secret Adversary within striving against our most spiritual Reflections? and is there no need of a Watch? Alas! this being a constant Adversary, requires our constant Care. It being a secret and inward Adversary, requires our utmost diligence and prudence. Who is there of us, who serves God with that care, and obeys him with that reverence as he doth his worldly Superior? Do we not sometimes hate instruction when it goes against the grain, and cast the Words of God behind our backs, and thus kick against the Lawgiver? Do we not many times prefer the Flesh before him? (I know, in the bent of the heart a Godly man doth not, but in some particular Acts he may and doth) Are not our Understandings more frequently awakened to any thing, than that which God doth command? Are



not our desires too Vehement for those things which have no commerce with the Law and Mind of God? Have we no doubts of his Faithfulness, no murmuring against his Sovereign disposal of things, no risings of Heart against his Law, against his Providences, no Self confidence, Envy, Ambition, Revenge? All these are but the Branches of this bitter Root. And is not our exactest care and constant watchfulness requisite against the workings of this natural cursed disposition? Sure it is, and sure it must be.

### MOTIVES.

- I. 1. Consider the *disingenuity of this Enmity.*

There is no necessity thou shouldst be his Enemy, it will not be Honourable to thee to stand out. *Peter* denied Christ, when his own Life was in danger; and thou hatest God, who would put the life of thy Soul out of danger. 'Tis against all the obligations of Nature and Grace, to be an Enemy to him to whom thou owest thy

thy Being, thy preservation from Hell, and recovery from Misery, but for thy own Fault. Do we not voluntarily subject our selves to Men, whom we esteem good, though the loveliness of their Persons, and the goodness of their Nature be infinitely short of God, and are as much below him in alluring Qualities, as they are in Greatness and Majesty? What Benefits can Men bestow upon their Servants, like those God doth recompence his sincere Adorers with? Men may love their Friends more than they can help them; but the loving-kindness of God is attended with a Power as infinite as it self.

*I. God hath been good to us.*

*I.*

He is Love, and we are out of love with Love it self. Is he not our Father? why should we not Honour him? Is he not our Master? why should we not Obey him? Is he not our Benefactor? why should we not Affect him? Whence have we our Mercies, but from his Hand? Who besides him maintains our Breath this moment?

*1 Joh. 4. 8.*

moment? Would he call for our Spirits this instant, they must depart from us to attend his Command? What shall his Benefits be made Weapons of Unrighteousness, and the Devils Arms against him? Christ died for us while we were Enemies, and shall we stand out as Enemies still? It will be the least thou canst do to love him at the very time he shows Mercy to thee, and that is every minute. There is not a moment wherein thou canst with any ingenuity be an enemy to him, because there is not a moment wherein he is not thy Guardian, wherein thou dost not tast of his Bounty. God hath let thee have thy swing all this time, thou hast had thy Rendezvous at thy Pleasure, and he never laid wait for thee but in kindness. He might have dealt with us, as we do with Venomous Creatures, and destroyed such a generation of Vipers, and crushed the Cockatrice in the Egg. What a disgraceful thing is it to put off the Nature of Men for that of Devils, to hate God under Mercy, as much

much as the Devils do under wrathful Anger? Is not God our greatest Benefactor, and shall he have nothing but disdain from us for all his Benefits? The Psalmist cries out, *What shall I render to the Lord for all his Benefits towards me?* But it is the Language of our Heart, *What ill turns shall we render to God for all his Mercies unto us?* 'Tis his *Mercy we are not consumed*, and shall we spend this Mercy upon our Lusts? He was Compassionate in sparing us, and shall we be Ungrateful in hating him? 'Tis the highest Disingenuity.

2dly. *God hath been importunate in intreaties of us.*

2.

God offers not only Truce, but a Peace, and hath been most active in urging a Reconciliation. Can he manifest his willingness in clearer Methods, than that of sending his Son to reconcile the World to Himself? Can he evidence more sincerity than by his repeated and reiterated pressing of our Souls to the acceptance of Him? God knocks at our Hearts,  
and



and we are deaf to him; He thunders in our Ears, and we regard him not; He waits upon us for our acceptance of his Love, and we grow more mad against him; He beseecheth us, and we ungratefully and proudly reject him; He opens his bosome, and we turn our backs; He offers us his pearls, and we tread them under our feet; He would cloath us with pure linnen, but we would still wear our foul rags; He would give us Angels bread, and we feed on husks with Swine. The wisdom of God shines upon us, and we account it foolishness. The infinite kindness of God courts us, and we refuse it, as if it were the greatest cruelty. Christ calls and begs, and we will not hear him either commanding or intreating. To love God is our privilege, and though it be our indispensable duty, yet it had been a presumption in us to aspire so high as to think the casting our earthly affections upon so transcendent an object should be dear to him, had he not authorised it by his command, and encouraged it by his acceptance.

ceptance. But 'tis strange that God should court us by such varieties of kindness to that, wherein not his happiness, but our perfection doth consist; and much stranger, that such pieces of Earth and Clay should turn their Backs upon so adorable an Object, and be Enemies to him, who displays himself in so many Allurements to their Souls, and fix their hatred upon that tender God who sues for their Affections. If you consider that

1. *God is our Superior.* An Inferior should seek to a Superior, not a Superior to one below him. There is an Equality between Man and Man, but an infinite Inequality between God and us. 1.

2. *God is the party wronged,* and yet offers a Parley. 2.

3. *When he could as well Damn us, as Court us;* he wants not Power to rid his hands of us, but he would rather show his Almightyness in the triumph of his Mercy, than the Trophies of his Justice; He had rather be 3.

be a refreshing Light, than a consuming Fire.

The Second Motive.

2. 2. This *Enmity to God*, 'tis the greatest Folly and Madness.

The Scripture tells us, that Sin is Folly and Madness; And certainly had Man a clear prospect of this Truth, which in his first Apostacy he fell from, so that he could examine all his Speculations, Desires, Motions, and Actions by that Rule, they would appear to him to be acts of a craz'd and Frantick Mind. Therefore, when upon our return to God we have but a glimpse of this Truth, how much asham'd is Man of the deformity of his Actions from that Rule; as a Man that hath been Mad, is of those pranks he plaid in his Phrenzy, after he is brought to his right Wits. Hence Repentance, which is always accompanied with a Shame, is called *μετάνοια*, a return to our right Wits.

1. This

I. This Enmity to God, 'tis in it self *Irrational*; because,

I.

I. *God is the most lovely Object.*

I.

He hath in his own nature, as well as in his Operations the highest right to our Love: for the more of Entity and Being any thing hath, the more of Perfection, and the more lovely it is in it self; and the more to be belov'd by us. Now God hath the most of Being, because other Beings were eminently contained in his immense Essence, and produced by his infinite Power, and were the Manifestations of himself, and lines drawn from him, and by him; and therefore He is the most amiable Object, because the Creature hath nothing lovely but only what it hath from God, which is more eminently treasur'd up in him, and may in him be seen and enjoyed with a greater advantage. The Creatures are but Pictures, and can no more represent to the full the true amiableness of God, than a few Colours, tho' never so well suited together, can the

Moral



Moral or Intellectual Loveliness of the Soul of Man. As God had all the Idea's of his Creatures in his Mind, so he had all the virtues of them in his Essence. Therefore to love any Creature above God, and so to hate him, is the highest piece of unreasonableness.

2. 2dly. *God is the chiefest Good, and the Fountain of all Goodness.*

'Tis unreasonable to look upon that, which comes from the Fountain of Goodness, to be destructive to our true Pleasure; yet Men have such hard thoughts of Religion and Divine Commands, as if they were designed for their utter ruin, when they are the effluxes of infinite Goodness. All hatred doth arise from an apprehension of the inconsistency of the thing we hate, with something we esteem a part of our happiness; and Sinners being possessed with the thoughts of the Justice and Holiness of God, as inconsistent with their Darling Sin, hate him for being of a Nature so contrary to that which they love; where-

as none of God's perfections are repugnant to our Being, or Well-being in themselves: For would we have a God unjust, what comfort could we then take in him; we hate him for being against that which is most against us? We hate him for hating of that which would destroy our Souls, and imbitter our Beings to us to all Eternity: We hate him for hating that, which if it were possible would disquiet his Felicity, and destroy his Being. What an unreasonable thing is it, to quarrel with that Law of God, which obligeth you to nothing but what conduceth to the benefit of your Souls, and the order of the World? What doth it bound and restrain you from, but that which would bring destruction upon you? Is it not a greater advantage to be carried fetter'd to Heaven, than to run at liberty to Hell? who but a Madman would prefer the Devil's before God's Yoke, and be the Captive of a hellish Tyrant, rather than the Subject of a Gracious Sovereign? What an unreasonable

R sonable

sonable thing is it to love any Sin, a privation better than the best of Beings? Can we expect to get as much advantage from him, by being his Enemies, as by being his Friends, since he is of so Merciful a Disposition?

3. 3dly. God cannot possibly do us Wrong.

All right Hatred is from a real Wrong, sense of Wrong, or fear of Wrong; either of those is an unjust imputation upon God, who cannot possibly do wrong to his Creatures, because he cannot be unrighteous. *Rom. 3. 5. Is God unrighteous who takes vengeance, Μη γένοιτο.* For God is so far from being injurious in the least to us, that he doth cast about, and contrive our Happiness in his Laws, more than we can our selves, or are willing he should do for us. Men cannot, if they consult but the sparks of Reason, but confess the reasonableness of Gods Commands, and be satisfied in the righteousness of the Duties

ries enjoined, and the profitableness of the Counsels set out in the Gospel, and must needs look upon the Felicity promised, to be excellent and desirable, and therefore cannot upon any reasonable account charge God with doing them any Wrong. Or let me argue thus; Either God hath Wrong'd us, or not; if not, it is unreasonable to disaffect him; if he hath, why should we hate him, seeing if God could do any injustice, he would not have the being of a God? For if it were possible, as soon as ever he should cease to be Just and Righteous, he would cease to be God, and destroy his own Nature: For as every Man in doing an Unjust Act, is less than a Man, and loses the end of his own Reason; so God by doing any Injustice, would be less than a God. Nay our hating him as Judge, is highly irrational, because of his Equity, and Righteousness in all his proceedings. And because it is our own act in forcing him to that by our Evil Practises, which he



is not willing to do but according to his own Righteous Nature, and for the Vindication of his Holiness in his Law, cannot but do, upon our final Impenitency, and persisting in our Transgressions.

4.

4thly. *God cannot be hurt by us.*

'Tis a folly among Men to show their Enmity where they cannot hurt. What an unreasonable Boldness is it for a man to think he can grapple with Omnipotency, and enter the Lists with the Fountain of all Strength and Power? What is thy Enmity, but a small wrigling against God? What disadvantage can accrue to him by thy opposing him? Just as much as the Moon receives by the Dog's barking at it, which neither stands still, nor alters its Course, nor is frightened at the noise. Foolish man! that will not discover an Enmity against a Superior, but rakes it up in the Ashes, and muzzles his Anger till he be able to bite; and yet proclaims a War openly against Heaven, as if he were too strong for God,  
and

and God too weak for him. As the Light of God's Face, is too dazling to be seen, so the Arm of his Power is too mighty to be oppress'd by us. His Almightyness is above the reach of our potsher'd Strength, as his Infiniteness is above the Capacity of our purblind Understandings. His Happiness is too firm to be disturb'd by us, as well as his Essence too glorious to be comprehended. What force canst thou have to resist the Presence of him, before whom the Rocks melt, and the Heavens at length will be shrivell'd up as Parchment by the last fire?

5thly. But though thou canst not hurt God, yet *thou dost mightily wrong thy self.*

Senseless Sinner! God is out of thy Gunshot; thy Arrows are too short for that Mark, but his are long enough for thee; thy Shot will fall before it reach him, but his Arrows will both reach thy Heart, and stick in it. Hatred in the World is attended sometimes with outward advantage; but

what gain canst thou expect by this Enmity? What refreshment is there by thy endeavouring to dry up the Fountain? What good by labouring to destroy the Original of Goodness it self? What harm is it to the Sun to shoot up Arrows against it? Do they pierce its Light, or shatter any of the Sparks of it? No, but they fall down upon the Archer's head. The Opposition of a wicked Man against God is much like a man's running his head against a Rock, to be reveng'd on it for splitting his Ship; whereby he bruiseeth not the Rock, but dasheth out his own Brains, and pays his Life for a price of his folly. Poor man is like a Potsherd, that justles with a Rock, and bursts it self! and is not this the highest piece of Madnes? *Isa.* 45. 9. *Wo unto him that strives with his Maker: let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth.* Dost thou fight against the Rock of Ages? it will rather blunt thy Weapon than be hurt by thy Arm; it will make thy Sword fly back in pieces upon thy own Face.

Every

Every wicked Man is a greater Enemy to himself than the Devil is, and wrongs himself more than the Devil can do; because he nourisheth that Sin in him which wars against his Soul.

3dly. The Third Motive, Consider *the Misery of such a state.* 3.

Thou wilt be miserable with a witness, 1 Cor. 16. 22. *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema.* Let all the Curses in Heaven and Earth light upon him. Let the Mercy, Wisdom, Power, Strength of God appear against him; let him not have an Advocate to make any Plea for him. Angels, Men, Devils will all appear against such a person.

1. Thou canst not possibly escape Vengeance. 1.

The Sodomites, whose Sins had so long dar'd God's Justice, might have better escap'd than thou canst: But, alas! what force hath a Puppy or Worm in a Lion's paw? Thou art no more in



his hand than a Fly between a Gyant's fingers.

Go foolish self-deluding Creature, recollect thy self. Can such a Bubble, Dust, Chaff, Stubble, worse than nothing and Vanity, wrestle with God? Ah poor Worm! Wilt thou set thy self in a strutting Array against Omnipotency, far less in God's hands than a Chicken new stript of its Shell in the Talons of an Eagle. *Jacob*, a holy Man, wrestled with him upon a holy account, and broke his Thigh; take heed in thy wrestling with him upon a sinful account, thou dost not break thy Neck. If he be thy friend, none can hurt thee; but if thy enemy, none can relieve thee. He is the best friend when Men will love him, but as terrible an enemy as consuming fire, when Men will hate him. Thou must be subject to him whether thou wilt or no, there is no remedy; if submission to his Mercy be not free, subjection to his Justice must be forc'd. We must be under his Power whether we will or no; we cannot wrest our selves

selfes out of the compass of his Arm ;  
if we go down to Hell , he is there ;  
if we dive to the bottom of the Deep,  
thence his Hand will fetch us out.  
We always have been , are still , and  
for ever must be within the reach of  
his Almighty Power. Whither wilt  
thou go ? Is there any Garison to de-  
fend thee ? any Sanctuary to secure  
thee ? any Champion to stand for thee ?  
If all the Angels in Heaven , and De-  
vils in Hell , should rouze up them-  
selves to be thy Protectors , thou  
wouldest be just as happy , as if thou  
hadst the shelter of the Dust of the  
Balance , or a drop of a Bucker. Can  
we blind his Eye that he should not  
see , or deafen his Ear that he should  
not hear , or bind his Arm that he  
should not strike ? Can we remove  
his Jealousy by increasing it ? Can  
we mitigate Everlasting Burnings by  
adding Oil to them ? Can our Sins  
stand out against his Judgments , or  
our Persons successfully combat with  
his Wrath ? Before any of those can  
be done , the Creator must descend in-  
to

to our Impotency. What man will confess he is able to do any of those, and yet he will walk in a Path of Enmity? Wrath will come, though it be slow in coming; 'Tis slow, but sure; the longer it is preparing, the bitterer will it be in enduring. Let all Devils and Sinners in the World join together, how soon is God able to overthrow them, and turn their *Babel-Fort* to their own Confusion, and bury them in the Ruins of their own Works! *Prov. 11. 21. Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunish'd.* How would he fling them all into Hell, as one of us can a Bag of Dust or Sand into the Sea?

2.

2dly. *Thou dost even force God to destroy thee for his own content,* and as it were provoke him to damn thee for his own Ease; if thou wilt not lay down thy Arms, thou dost wrest Wrath out of his hands, *Zech. 6. 8. Have quiered my spirit.* He speaks of the Angels which he had sent out against Babylon, those black Horses which

which noted Death and Destruction; and those Angels doing their work and duty, are said by himself to quiet his Spirit; so that God can have no Rest in his own Spirit but by thy submission or destruction. And the longer thou dost stand out, the more thou dost provoke God to take some course for the easing of himself: for Punishment in another place he calls his *Ease*, Isa. i. 24. *I will ease me of my adversaries*; and the latter words explain it, *I will avenge me of my enemies*. Is not the Honour of God concern'd in his Laws? and would he not make himself ridiculous to the Sons of Men, if he did not severely punish their Violations of them?

3dly. *God cannot save thee without disturbing the happiness of those that love him, and are loved by him.* 3.

Thou wilt but make a disturbance in Heaven by thy contrary disposition, and hinder that exact Harmony; Thy jarring Principles could never agree with that Consort; thy Enmity and Division



Division with that Union; The Repose of the Saints would be disquieted, and their Pleasure cool'd: for if they cared not for thy Company in the World, when they had many reliques of Enmity in themselves, and an imperfect holiness, they can less endure it in Heaven, where their holiness is fully ripe, and their hatred against impiety perfectly strong; And God will not bring thee thither with that cursed nature thou hast, to damp their joy, and spoil the order of Heaven.

A state of Wrath must necessarily succeed a state of Enmity: for Heaven can never be a place suitable to you, it will be as little agreeable to you, as your being there will be to God.

4. *4ly. Thou hast the beginnings of Hell in thee already.*

Enmity is a hellish Disposition. As the perfection of Love in Heaven is a part of Heaven's Happiness, so the perfection of Enmity in Hell is a part

part of the damned's Misery. The sight of God in Heaven enflames Love in Saints, so the absence of God from Hell enrageth Enmity in the Devils and damned Spirits.

5ly. *All thy Enmity will certainly be charged upon thee one day.* 5.

There is a time when all thy acts of Enmity shall be set in order before thee, *Psal. 50. 21. I will set them in order before thee.* This is to be understood *more Militari*, when sin shall be set in rank and file, in bloody array against thy Soul. Or *more Forensi*, when they shall be set in order as so many Inditements for thy Rebellion and Treason. What sadness will seize upon thee at the last, when God shall fix upon thee out of the Croud, and point at thee, *Luk. 19. 27. But those my Enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.* How solemnly will he execute every Enemy at the last! they shall be brought out shackled one by one, and Christ will sit and behold

hold it. Lo here is one of my Enemies, I have found him out for all his fair hopes of escape. When Men and Angels shall say, *Lo this is the man* that made not God his Strength; this is the Man that set up other Gods in his heart; that was such a fool as to think his Pleasure, Riches, Strength, Honour, to be his God. Ah fool with a witness, to think that a God could be of thy own making!

---

Chiefest

# CHURCH HISTORY

Church of Christ, Mary

THE HISTORY OF THE

CHURCH OF CHRIST, MARY, AND THE  
OF ALL NATIONS, FROM THE FIRST  
TWO HUNDRED YEARS OF THE  
CHRISTIAN ERA.

THE HISTORY OF THE

CHURCH OF CHRIST, MARY, AND THE  
OF ALL NATIONS, FROM THE FIRST  
TWO HUNDRED YEARS OF THE  
CHRISTIAN ERA.

THE HISTORY OF THE

CHURCH OF CHRIST, MARY, AND THE  
OF ALL NATIONS, FROM THE FIRST  
TWO HUNDRED YEARS OF THE  
CHRISTIAN ERA.





# Chiefest Sinners

## Objects of Choicest Mercy.

1 TIM. I. 15.

*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.*

1. Obs. **T**HE Salvation of Sinners was the main design of Christ's coming into the World.

2. God doth often make the chiefest Sinners Objects of his choicest Mercy.

For the last, That God doth so.

1. God hath formerly made invitations to such. See what a black Generation

B

ration

ration they were, *Isa. 1.* by the scrowl of their Sins. They were Rebels, and Rebels against him that had nursed them. *Vers. 2.* *I have nourish'd and brought up children, and they have rebell'd against me:* And in this respect worse than the Beasts they were masters of) the stupid Ox, and the dull Ass outstript them in ingenuity. *Vers. 3.* *The Ox knoweth his owner, and the Ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.* He calls upon Heaven and Earth to judge between them, *v. 2.* He appeals to Men and Angels, as a Jury to give their Verdict, whether these People had not been the most disingenuous and ungrateful People in the World. Or if by Heavens and Earth be meant Magistrates and People, as in the Prophetick style they are usually taken, God then appeals to themselves, to let their own natural Consciences, and the common Ingenuity their Sins had left them, to judge between them. He comes to charge them, *v. 4.* *laden with iniquity:* They had such great weights lying upon them, that they were not able to stir; or laden with it,

as some Crab-tree is with sour Fruit. They had sprouted from a wicked Stock; they had corrupted one another by their Society, and Example, as rotten Apples putrify the sound ones that lie near them.

They had been incorrigible under Judgments; God had used the Rod again, and again; but being there was no reformation, he was even weary of whipping them any longer; v. 5. *Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more.* They were also so universally infected, that there was no sound part about them, but running Sores all over, both head and heart were infected; corrupt Notions in the one, and corrupt Affections in the other.

Or if you take it Prophetically, Head signifies the Chief Magistrate; Heart, the Judges; Feet the common People. The Fire which had burnt their Cities, had not consum'd their Lusts, and dried up their Sins; v. 7. *Your country is desolate, your cities are burnt with fire, your land strangers devour it in your presence; and it is desolate, as overthrown by stran-*



## Chiefest Sinners Objects

gers. And had it not been for a small Remnant, they had been as bad as Sodom and Gomorrah, v. 9. Their Services were polluted, vain, and an abomination to him, v. 13. A trouble to him, his Soul hated them, he was tired with them, v. 14. for they came with their bloody murderious hands into God's presence.

Yet though he justly charg'd them with these horrid Crimes, he gives them assurance of entertainment if they would return to him, v. 18. *Come now, and let us reason together*: He would condescend to debate the Case with them, when one would have thought he should have said, I'll have nothing to do with such a Crew as they; God loves to discourse with Men about this Argument of Pardon; and he loves that Men should hear him speak concerning it. He would dispute them out of their Sins, into good and right apprehensions of his Mercy.

So *Isa. 31. 6. Turn ye unto him from whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted.* Revolted, there is their Sin; deeply, there's the aggravation of it; and

and being also Children of *Israel*, a People of much Mercy, and Miracles, there's another aggravation; yet turn unto him against whom you have thus sinn'd.

The great Objection of a Penitent is, I have sinn'd, and I know not whether God will receive me: Consider, God knows thy Sin better than thou dost, yet he kindly calls to thee, and promiſeth thee as good a reception as if thou hadst never sinn'd.

So *Jer. 3. 1.* They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? But thou hast play'd the harlot with many lovers, yet return again to me, saith the Lord. Though thou hast been a common Whore, and made all Comers, every Idol welcome, and been in league with many Sins; yet upon thy return I'll own thee; and these are God's warrants for encouragement.

2. God hath given Examples of it in Scripture. Adam, the Ring-leader of all Rebellions of Mankind in the World,

had the promise of the Seed of the Woman to break the Serpents head made to him : And in the Genealogy of Christ, is call'd the Son of God, *Luk. 3. 38.* not only in respect of Creation, for so the Devil is the Son of God ; but in a nearer relation. Yet all that deluge of Wickedness which has overflow'd the World since the Fall, sprung out of his Loyns. Nay, *Abraham*, the Father of the Faithful, was probably an Idolater in *Ur* of the *Caldees*, and a Worshipper of the Sun, and Fire, as his Fathers were, *Josh. 24. 2.* yet God makes a particular Covenant with this Man, presents him with a richer Act of Grace than any in the World besides him had, even that the *Messiah*, the great Redeemer of the World, should come from his Seed ; This man is set up as the pattern of Faith to others, and his Bosome seems to be a great receptacle of Saints in glory, *Luk. 16. 22, 23.* *Israel's* Sins were as a thick Cloud, yet this powerful Sun did melt them. *Isa. 44. 22.* *I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins.* A fullen gloomy Morning often

of Choicest Mercy.

7

often ends in a well-complexion'd Noon.

*Manasseh* is an eminent Example of this Doctrine. His story, 2 *Chron.* 33. represents him as black as a Devil, if all the aggravations of his Sin be consider'd.

1. 'Twas against knowledge. He had a pious Education under a Religious Father; an Education usually leaves some tinctures and impressions of Religion. No doubt but the Instructions his Father *Hezekiah* had taught him, and the exemplary holiness he had seen in him, were sometimes awakened in his memory, and recoil'd upon his Conscience.

1.

2. *His Place and Station, a King*: Sins of King's are like their Robes, more Scarlet and Crimson than the Sins of a Peasant. Their Example usually infects their Subjects. As they are not without their Attendance in their Progresses, and Recreations, so neither in their Vices and Virtues.

2.

3. *Restoration of Idolatry*. Had he found the Worship of the Host of Heaven deriv'd to him by succession from

3.



his Father, and the Idols set up to his hand, the continuance of them had less of sin, because more of temptation: But he built again those High Places and Altars to Idols after they had been broken down, v. 3. and dash'd in pieces that Reformation his Father had completed.

4. *Affronting God to his very face.* He sets up his Idols, as it were to nose God, and built Altars in the House of the Lord, and in the two Courts of his Temple, whereof God had said he would have his Name there for ever, v. 4, 5, 7. He brought in all the Stars of Heaven to be sharers in that Worship which was only due to the God of Heaven. What, could he find no other place for his Idols, but in the very Temple of God? must God be cast out of his House, to make room for Baal?

5. *Murder.* Perhaps of his Children, which he caused to pass through the fire as an Offering to his Idol, v. 6. It may be it was only for purification. But he had the guilt of much innocent Blood upon him, the streams whereof ran down in every part of the City.

2 Kings

of Choicest Mercy.

9

2 Kings 21. 16. Moreover Manasse shed innocent blood very much, till he filled Jerusalem with blood from one end to the other.

6. Covenant with the Devil. He us'd Enchantments, and Witchcraft, and dealt with a Familiar Spirit, v. 6. yea he had acquaintance with more Devils than one, and dealt with Familiar Spirits and Wizards in the plural Number.

6.

7. His other mens Sins. He did not only lead the People by his Example, but compell'd them by his Commands. 2 Chron. 33. 9. So Manasse made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the Heathen God had rooted out, to make room for them. Hereby he contracted the guilt of the whole Nation upon himself.

7.

8. Obstinacy against Admonitions. 2 Kings 21. 10. God spake to him and his People, but they would not hearken, or alter their course.

8.

9. Continuance in it. He ascended the Throne young, at 12 years old, v. 1. 'Tis uncertain how long he continued in this Sin. Torniellus thinks 15 years.

9.

Bellar-

*Bellarmino 27. Kircho 50. years, reckoning but 5 years of his Life after his Restauration.*

What a world of Sin, and aggravations of it, were there in this Man! and yet God was intreated, *v. 19.*

*3. The stock whereof Christ came, seems to intimate this; God might have kept the Stock, whence Christ descended according to the Flesh, pure, and free from being tainted with any notorious Crimes; but we find Sins of a crimson dye even among them.*

There are no Women reckon'd up in Christ's Genealogy, but such as in Scripture are noted for looseness, *Mat. 1. 3. Tamar* who play'd the harlot with Judah her Father-in-law, *Gen. 38. Rahab, v. 5. the Harlot of Jericho. Ruth, v. 5. a Gentile, and a Moabitess; the Root of whose Generation was Lox's Son by incest with his own Daughter. Bathsheba, v. 6. David's Adulteress. He chose these repenting Sinners, out of whose Loyns Christ was to come, that the greatest Sinners might not be afraid to come to him.*

Was

Was *David*, whose Son our Saviour is call'd, much better? 'Tis true, he was a man after God's own heart, but yet very notorious for that Act of Murder and Adultery, and with more aggravating Circumstances than usually are met with in Acts of the like nature, 2 Sam. 11. *Uriah* was a godly man, and had a sense of the Condition of the Church and Nation whereof he was a Member, v. 11. and such a Man's Bed *David* is not only content to defile, but he pollutes his Soul with drunkenness, v. 13. lays Snares for his Life, not in a manly, but sly and treacherous manner; for while he doth care for him, and show him a fair countenance in his Palace, he draws up secret Instructions to *Joab* so to order the business, that *Uriah* might be thrust into his Grave, and makes him the Post to carry the Commission for his own death, v. 15, 16. After all this he hath no remorse when he hears of the loss of so godly and valiant a man, but wipes his mouth, and sweeps all the dirt to the door of Providence, v. 25. Now Christ's Stock being thus tainted, was methinks an evidence



dence that Penitents, though before of the greatest pollutions, might be welcome to him. And that as he pickt out such out of whose Loyns to proceed, so he would pick out such also in whose hearts to reside.

4. 'Twas Christ's employment in the world to court and gain such kind of Creatures. The first thing he did, while in the Manger, was to snatch some of the Devil's Prophets out of his Service, and take them into his own, *Matth. 2. 1.* some of the *Magi*, who were Astrologers and Idolaters. When he fled from *Herod's Cruelty*, he chose *Egypt*, the most Idolatrous Country in the world, for his Sanctuary; a Place where the People worshipp'd Oxen, Crocodiles, Cats, Garlick, *putida Numina*, all kind of Riff-raff, to show, that he often comes to sojourn in the blackest Souls.

The first People he took care to preach to, were the Seamen, which usually are the rudest, and most debauch'd sort of men, as gaining the Vices, as well as the Commodities of these Nations they traffick with, *Matth.*

413. The Inhabitants of those Sea-coasts are said to sit in darkness, v. 16, in darkness both of Sin and Ignorance; Just as the *Egyptians* were not able to stir in that thick darkness, which was sent as a Plague upon them. And the Country, by reason of the Vices of the Inhabitants, is call'd the Region and shadow of Death; a Title properly belonging to Hell it self. To call Sinners to repentance, was the Errand of his coming. And he usually delighted to chuse such that had not the least pretence to merit, *Mark 2. 17. Matthew a Publican, Zachews an Extortioner; store of that Generation of Men, and Harlots, and very little Company besides.*

He chose his Attendants out of the Devil's Rabble; and he was more Jesus, a Saviour, among this sort of Trash, than among all other sorts of People; for all his design was to get Clients out of Hell it self. What was that Woman that he must needs go out of his way to convert? a Harlot, *John 4. 18.* an Idolater, for the *Samaritans* had a mixt Worship, a Linsey-woolsey Religion, and upon that account were hateful to the

the *Jews*. She continued in her whoredom at the very time Christ spake to her, yet he makes her a monument of his Grace; and not only so, but the first Preacher of the Gospel to her Neighbours; *v. 29. Is not this the Christ?* and an Instrument to conduct them to him, *Come, see a man which told me all things, &c.*

Was any more smutted than *Mary Magdalen*? seven Devils would make her footy to purpose, and so many did Christ cast out of her, *Mark 16. 9. Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appear'd first to Mary Magdalen*, out of whom he cast seven Devils. This lustful Devil he turns into a weeping Saint.

What was that *Canaanitish Woman*, who had so powerful a Faith infus'd? One sprung of a cursed Stock, hateful to God, rooted out of the pleasant Land, a Dog, not a Child; she comes a Dog, but returns a Child; Christ made this Crab in a Wilderness to bring forth Fruit, even the best that Heaven could afford; *viz. the Fruit of Faith*; and larger and better bunches of it, than at  
that

that time sprouted out of any Branches  
of the Jewish Vine, so well planted, and  
so often water'd by Christ himself.

When he comes to act his last part in  
the World, he saves a Thief, who was  
got to Hell-gates, ready to be push'd in  
by the Devil.

Do you find Examples among the  
Pharisees? No; Dunghill-Sinners take  
Heaven by violence, while the proud  
Pharisees lose it by their own righteous-  
ness. Scribes and Doctors continue De-  
vils in the Chair, while Harlots com-  
mence Saints from the Stews, and the  
Thief proceeds a Convert on the  
Cross.

Since there was but one that in his  
own person he converted, after he went  
to Heaven, What was he? One that  
had breathed out slaughters and threat-  
nings against the Church, Acts 9. 1. To  
do so, was as common with him, and  
natural to him, as to suck in Air, and  
breathe it out again: This Man gallop-  
ing to Hell as fast as his mad rage and  
passion could carry him, he stops in his  
career, ordains a Preacher of a Perse-  
cutor; gives him as large a Commis-  
sion,



sion as he had given any of his Favourites; for he makes him the chiefest Apostle of the *Gentiles*.

What Boggs and Miry Places did Christ drain, and make fruitful Gardens? What barren and thorny Wildernesses did he change into pleasant Paradises? He made Subjects of Vengeance Objects of Mercy: He told the Woman of *Samaritania*, who lived in fornication, that he was the *Messiah*, Joh. 4. 25. *The woman saith to him, I know that Messias cometh, which is call'd Christ: Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee, am he; which he never discover'd to the Self-righteous Pharisees, nor indeed in so many words to his Disciples, till Peter's confession of him.*

5. *The Commission Christ gave to his Apostles, was to this purpose:*

He bids them proclaim the Promise free to all, *Mark 16. 15. Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature: All the World, every Creature.* He put no difference between men in this respect, though you meet with them in the likeness of Beasts, and Devils,

Devils, never so wicked, never so abominable ; as long as they are Creatures, reach out the Cup of Salvation to them, if they will drink ; open the Treasures of Grace to them, if they will receive them ; indent with them for nothing but Faith for Justification, and Profession of it for their Salvation.

This Commission is set out by the Parable of a King, commanding his Servants to fetch the Maim'd, Halt and Blind, with their Wounds, Sores and Infirmities about them, *Luke 14. 21, 23.* Bring in hither the Poor, and the Maim'd, and the Halt, and the Blind. Yea, and go out into the Highways, and Hedges, and those loathsome Persons, those dregs of Mankind, which you shall find swarming with Vermin, and lousing themselves under every Hedge, bring them in ; if they pretend their Rags and Nastiness as unsuitable to My Rank and Quality, compel them, force them against their own natural Inclinations and doubts, that my House may be fill'd. God will have Heaven fill'd with such, when Self-righteous Persons refuse him. When  
C you

you come to Heaven, to sit down with *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, you'll find some, and a great many, that were once as filthy morally, as these *Hedge-birds* were naturally, who had once as many Lusts creeping about them, as there were Frogs in *Agypt*.

\* Grot. in  
Luk. 14.  
23.

Such a Compulsion as this spoken of, there was in the Primitive Times by the Power of the Spirit of Grace. \* Two Stage-players, that in their acting scoffed at the Christian Religion, were converted, and prov'd Martyrs; one under *Dioclesian*, the other under *Julian*.

6. *The practice of the Spirit after Christ's Ascension, to lay hold of such Persons.*

1. *Some out of the worst Families in the World:* One out of *Herod's*, Acts 13. 1. Now there were in the Church that was at *Antioch*, certain Prophets, and Teachers, as *Barnabas*, and *Simeon* that was call'd *Niger*, and *Lucius* of *Cyrene*, and *Manaen*, which had been brought up with *Herod the Tetrarch* and *Saul*. Either *Herod Antipas*, who derided Christ before

before *Pilate*; or *Herod Agrippa*, who put *James* to death; which of theſe *Herods* it was, 'twas not likely that in ſuch a Family he ſhould ſuck in any Principles advantageous to the Chriſtian Religion: For being brought up with him, he was either his Play-fellow when young; or his Confident when grown up; yet out of this Family of this wicked Prince he calls out one, to make not only an Object of his Mercy, but an Inſtrument of it to others, contrary to the force of Education, which uſually roots bad Principles deep in the heart. 'Tis likely to this intent the Holy Ghoſt takes particular notice of the Place of *Manaen's* Education, when the Families, where the reſt nam'd with him were bred up, are not mentioned: Some rude and rough Stones were taken out of *Nero's* Palace; ſome that were Servants to the moſt abominable Tyrant, and the greateſt Monster of Mankind; one that ſet *Rome* on fire, and play'd on his Harp while the flames were crackling about the City; ript up his Mother's Belly to ſee the place where he lay; would any of the Civiller ſort



of Mankind be Attendants upon such a Devil? yet some of this Monster's Servants became Saints. *Phil. 4. 22.* All the Saints salute you, chiefly *they that are of Caesar's household*: To hear of Saints in Nero's Family, is as great a Prodigy, as to hear of Saints in Hell. God before had promised his Grace to *Ægypt*, the most Idolatrous Country; there God would have an Altar erected, *Isa. 19. 18, 19, 20.* *In that day shall five Cities in the Land of Ægypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the Lord of hosts; in that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Ægypt.* And indeed the Gospel was famous in *Ægypt*, both at the Christian School at *Alexandria*, and for many famous Lights.

2. *Some of the worst Vices.*

*Ephesians* were as bad as any, such that *Paul* calls darkness it self; *Eph. 5. 8.* *For ye were sometimes darkness*: There was not only an Eclipse, or a dark Mask upon them, but they were chang'd into the very nature of Night. Great Idolaters; the Temple of *Diana* ador'd, and resorted to by all *Asia*, and the whole World,

World, was in that City, *Acts* 19. 27. That the Temple of the great Goddess *Diana* ſhould be deſpiſed, and her Magnificence ſhould be deſtroy'd, *whom all Aſia, and the world worſhippeth*. And they cry up this Statue they pretended fell down from *Jupiter*, above Chriſt, who was preached by *Paul* \*. They \* *Plin. lib. 5. cap. 36.* were given to Magick, and other Diabolical Arts; yet many of theſe were weaned from their Idol, and their Magick, and of darkneſs were made light in the Lord; which is more than if you ſaw a black piece of Pitch chang'd into a clear piece of Cryſtal, or a Stone aſcend into the nature of a glittering Star.

Take a view of another Corporation at *Corinth* of as filthy Perſons as ever you heard of, *1 Cor.* 6. 11. *ſuch were ſome of you*. After he had drawn out a Catalogue of their Sins againſt the light of Nature, and made the enumeration ſo perfect, that very little can be added. He adds, *ſuch were ſome of you*. Not all, but ſome. *But you are waſh'd, &c.* Not *τις*, ſuch Sinners; but *ταῦτα*, ſuch Sins. Perſons not only

committing some few acts of them, but so habituated in them, that they seemed metamorphosed into the very nature of these Sins themselves ; so that they were become the very Dirt, Mud, and Rubbish of Hell. Yet you see Devils he really turn'd into Angels of light.

Well then, how many flinty Rocks has God dissolv'd into a stream of Tears ? How many hard hearts has he made to bleed, and melt ? That which is now pure Gold, has been earthy, and polluted.

I shall only add this to the whole.

Great Sins are made preparations by God to some mens Conversion, not in their own nature, that's impossible ; but by the wise disposal of God, which Mr. *Burges* illustrates thus ; As a Child whose Coat is but a little dirty, has it not presently wash'd ; but when he comes to fall over head and ears in the mire, 'tis taken off, and wash'd immediately ; the Child might have gone many a day with a little dirt, had not such an Accident happen'd.

*Peter*

Peter might have had his proud and vain-glorious Humour still, had he not fell so foully in the denial of his Master ; but when he fell into the Jakes , and Puddle , it promotes his Conversion : For so Christ calls it, *Luke 22. 32. And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren ;* 'twas Conversion in a new Edition ; and you do not find him in the same boasting vanity again.

David's falling into the Sin of Murder and Adultery , is the occasion of the ransacking his Soul, which you find him not so hot about another time : He digs all about to the very Root, *Psal. 51. 5. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.* This Sin had stirr'd and rak'd up all the mud in his heart, and made him see himself an abominable Creature : Therefore , *v. 9.* he desires God to *hide his face from his sins* ; he was so loathsome, he would not have any one look upon him ; (fling all this mud out of my Soul), and prays more earnestly for a new heart, and a right spirit. So when a wicked man falls into some grievous sin, which his Conscience frowns upon him , and



lashes him for, he looks out for a shelter, which in all his peaceable wickedness he never did.

2.

2. *Why God doth chuse the greatest Sinners, and let his Elect run on so far in sin before he turns them.*

1. *There is a passive disposition in the greatest Sinners, more than in moral or superstitious men, to see their need: Because they have not any self-righteousness to boast of. Man's blameless outward carriage and freedom from the common Sins of the Times and Places wherein they live, many times proves a snare of death to them, and makes them more cold and faint towards Christ: Because they possess themselves with imaginations, that Christ cannot but look upon them, though they never so much as set their faces toward him. And because they are not drencht in such Villanies as others are, their Consciences sit quiet under this moral Carriage, and gauls them not by any self-reflections; Therefore when the Threatnings of the Law are denounc'd against*  
such

such and such Sins, these men wipe their mouths, being untainted from those Sins that are thus curs'd, and vainly glory in their gay and gawdy Plumes, and bless God with the *Pharisee*, that they are not Sinners of such a Scarlet dye, and that they do such and such Duties, and so go on without seeing a necessity of the new Birth; and by this means the strength of Sin is more compacted and condens'd in them.

Superstitious and formal men are hardly reduc'd to their right Wits; Partly because of a defect in Reason, from whence those Extravagancies arise; and partly because those false habits and spirit of error possessing their Faculties, they are incapable of more generous impressions: Besides, they are more tenacious of the Opinions they have suckt in, which have got the empire and command over their Souls; such misguided Zeal fortifies men against proposals of Grace, and fastens them in a more obstinate inflexibleness to any converting-motions. This self-righteous Temper is like an external heat got into the Body, which produceth

duceth an Hectick-Fever, and is not easily perceived till it be incurable; and naturally 'tis a harder matter to part with Self-righteousness, than to part with gross Sins: for that is more deeply rooted upon the stock of Self love, a Principle which departs not from us without our very Nature: It hath more Arguments to plead for it; It hath natural Conscience a Patron of it. Whereas a great Sinner stands speechless at Reproofs, and a faithful Monitor has a good Second and Correspondent of natural Conscience within a man's own breast. It was not the gross Sins of the *Jews* against the light of Nature, so much as the establishing the Idol of their own Righteousness, that was the block to hinder them from submitting to the Righteousness of God, *Rom. 10. 3.*

Christ came to his own, and his own receiv'd him not, *John 1. 11.* Those that seem to have his peculiar stamp and mark upon them, that had their heads in Heaven by some kind of resemblance to God in Moral Righteousness, being undefiled with the common

mon Pollutions of the World : These received him not, when Publicans and Harlots got the start of them, and run before them, to catch hold of the tenders of grace, *Matth. 21. 31. Publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before you.* Just as Travellers that have loyter'd away their time in an Alehouse, being sensible how the darkness of the night creeps upon them, spur on, and outstrip those that were many Miles on their way, and get to their Stage before them. So these Publicans and Harlots which were at a great distance from Heaven, arriv'd there before those, who like the Young man were not far off from it.

Great Sinners are more easily convinced of the notorious wickedness of their Lives ; and reflecting upon themselves because of their horrid Crimes against the light of Nature, are more inclinable to endeavour an escape from the Devil's slavery, and are frightened and shaken by their Consciences into a compliance with the Doctrine of Redemption ; whereas those that do by nature the things contained in the Law,  
are



are so much a Law to themselves, that 'tis difficult to persuade them of the necessity of conforming to another Law, and to part with this Self-law in matter of Justification. As Metals of the noblest substance are hardest to be polish'd; so Men of the most generous, natural and moral Endowments, are more difficultly argued into a state of Christianity, than those of more drossy Conversations. *Cassianus* speaks very peremptorily in this case; *Frequenter vidimus de frigidis & Carnalibus ad Spiritualem venisse fervorem de lepidis & animalibus nunquam.*

2. 2. To shew the insufficiency of Nature to such a work as Conversion is, that men may not fall down, and Idolize their own Wit and Power. A change from Acts of Sin to Moral Duties, may be done by a natural strength, and the prevalency of natural Conscience: For the very same Motives which led to Sin, as Education, Interest, Profit, may upon a change of Circumstances, guide men to an outward Morality; but a change to the contrary Grace is supernatural.

Two things are certain in Nature.

1. *Natural Inclinations never change, but by some superior Virtue.* A Load-stone will not cease to draw Iron, while that attractive quality remains in it. The Wolf can never love the Lamb, nor the Lamb the Wolf; nothing but must act suitably to its Nature. Water cannot but moisten, Fire cannot but burn. So likewise the Corrupt Nature of Man being possess'd with an invincible contrariety and enmity to God, will never suffer him to comply with God. And the Inclinations of a Sinner to sin being more strengthen'd by the frequency of sinful Acts, have as great a power over him, and as natural to him, as any Qualities are to natural Agents. And being stronger than any Sympathies in the World, cannot by a man's own power, or the power of any other Nature equal to it, be turn'd into a contrary Channel.

2. *Nothing can act beyond its own Principle and Nature.* Nothing in the World can raise it self to a higher rank of  
of

of being, than that which Nature hath plac'd it in ; A Spark cannot make it self a Star, though it mount a little up to Heaven ; nor a Plant endue it self with Sense, nor a Beast adorn it self with Reason : Nor a Man make himself an Angel. Thorns cannot bring forth Grapes, nor Thistles produce Figs ; because such Fruits are above the Nature of those Plants. So neither can our Corrupt Nature bring forth Grace, which is a Fruit above it. *Effectus non excedit Virtutem sua causa* : Grace is more excellent than Nature, therefore cannot be the Fruit of Nature. 'Tis Christ's Conclusion, *Matth. 12. 33, 34.* *How can you, being evil, speak good things?* Not so much as the buds and blossoms of Words, much less the fruit of Actions. They can no more change their Natures, than a Viper can cashier his Poyson. Now though this I have said be true, yet there is nothing Man does more affect in the World than a self-sufficiency, and an independency upon any other Power but his own. This Temper is as much riveted in his Nature, as any other false Principle whatsoever :  
For

For Man does derive it from his first Parents, as the prime Legacy bequeathed to his Nature : For it was the first thing discover'd in Man at his Fall ; he would be as God , independent upon him. Now God, to cross this Principle, suffers his Elect, like *Lazarus*, to lie in the Grave, till they stink, that there may be no excuse to ascribe their Resurrection to their own Power. If a putrified rotten Carcass should be brought to life, it could never be thought that it inspir'd it self with that active Principle. God lets men run on so far in sin, that they do unman themselves , that he may proclaim to all the World, that we are unable to do any thing of our selves at first towards our recovery, without a superior Principle. The evidence of which will appear if we consider,

1. *Man's subjection under sin.* He is fold under sin, *Rom. 7. 14.* and brought into captivity to the law of sin, *v. 23. law of sin*, that sin seems to have a legal authority over him ; and man is not only a Slave to one sin, but divers, *Tit.*

1. 3.

1.



1. 3. *-serving divers lusts.* Now when a man is sold under the power of a thousand Lusts, every one of which hath an absolute tyranny over him, and rules him as a Sovereign by a Law. When a man is thus bound by a thousand Laws, a thousand Cords and Fetters, and carried whither his Lords please, against the dictates of his own Conscience, and force of natural light; can any man imagine, that his own power can rescue him from the strength of these Masters that claim such a right to him, and keep such a force upon him, and have so often baffled his own strength, when he offer'd to turn head against them.

2. 2. *Mans affection to them.* He doth not only serve them, but he serves them and every one of them with delight, *Tit. 3. 3. And pleasures.* They were all Pleasures, as well as Lusts; Friends, as well as Lords. Will any man leave his Voluptuousness, and such sins that please and flatter his Flesh? will a man ever endeavour to run away from those Lords which he serves with affection? having as much delight in  
being

being bound a Slave to these Lusts, as the Devil hath in binding him.

Therefore when you see a man cast away his Pleasures, deprive himself of those Contentments to which his Soul was once knit, and walk in Paths contrary to Corrupt Nature, you may search for the cause any-where, rather than in Nature it self.

No piece of dirty muddy Clay can form it self into a neat and handsome Vessel; no plain piece of Timber can fit it self for the Building, much less a crooked one. Nor a man that is born blind, give himself Eyes.

God deals with men in this case, as he did with *Abraham*. He would not give *Isaac*, while *Sarah's* Womb in a natural probability might have born him; But when her Womb was dead, and Age had taken away all natural strength of Conception, then God gives him; that it might appear, that he was not a Child of Nature, but a Child of Promise.

I have been the larger on these two Heads (which I design rather as things premised, than Reasons) because these

two Principles of common Honesty, and Self-sufficiency, are the great impediments to Conversion, and natural to most men.

3. 3. God doth this for his own Glory.  
His

1. 1. Patience.

We wonder when we see a notorious Sinner, how God can let his Thunders lie still by him, and his Sword rust in his Sheath. And indeed when such are converted, they wonder themselves, that God did not draw his Sword out, and pierce their Bowels, or shoot one of his Arrows into their hearts all this while.

But God by such a forbearance shews himself to be God indeed, and something in this Act infinitely above such a weak Creature as Man is, *Hosea 11. 9, I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim; for I am God, and not man.*

When God had reckon'd up their sins before, and they might have expected the Sentence, after the reading the Charge; God tells them, he would  
not

not destroy them, he would not execute them, because he was God.

If he were not a God, he could not keep himself from pouring out a just Vengeance upon them. If a man did inherit all the Meekness of all the Angels, and all the Men that ever were in the World, he could not be able to bear with patience the Extravagancies and Injuries done in the World the space of one day: For none but a God, *i. e.* one infinitely long-suffering, can bear with them.

Not a Sin past in the World before the coming of Christ in the flesh, but was a Commendatory Letter of God's forbearance, *Rom. 3. 25.* To declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: And not a sin past before the coming of Christ into the Soul, but gives the same testimony, and bears the same record. And the greater number of sins, and great sins are past, the more Trophies there are erected to God's long-suffering: The reason why the grace of the Gospel appear'd so late in the World, was to testify God's Pa-



tience. Our Apoſtle takes notice of  
 this long-ſuffering towards himſelf in  
 bearing with ſuch a Perſecutor, *1 Tim.*  
*1. 16. Howbeit, for this cauſe I obtained*  
*mercy, that in me, firſt Jeſus Chriſt might*  
*ſhew forth all long-ſuffering, for a pattern*  
*to them which ſhould hereafter believe on*  
*him.* This was Chriſt's end in letting  
 him run ſo far, that he might ſhew  
 forth not a few mites, grains, or ounces  
 of Patience; but *all long-ſuffering*, long-  
 ſuffering without meaſure, or weight,  
 by whole-sale; and this as a Pattern to  
 all the Ages of the World: *τύπος*,  
 for a type; a type is but a ſhadow in  
 reſpect of the ſubſtance. To ſhow, that  
 all the Ages of the World ſhould not  
 waſte that Patience, whereof he had  
 then manifeſted but a Pattern. A Pat-  
 tern we know is leſs than the whole  
 Piece of Cloath from whence 'tis cut.  
 And as an Eſſay is but a ſhort taſte of a  
 man's ſkill, and doth not diſcover all  
 his Art. As the firſt Miracle Chriſt  
 wrought, of turning Water into Wine,  
 as a Sample of what Power he had, was  
 leſs than thoſe Miracles which ſucceed-  
 ed; And the firſt Miracle God wrought

in *Egypt*, in turning *Aaron's* Rod into a Serpent, was but a Sample of his Power which would produce greater Wonders: So this patience to *Paul* was but a little Essay of his Meekness, a little Patience cut off from the whole Piece, which should always be dealing out to some Sinners or other; and would never be cut wholly out till the World had left being. This Sample or Pattern was but of the extent of a few years: For *Paul* was but young, the Scripture terms him a Young man, *Acts* 7. 58. \* about 36 years of Age, yet he calls it all long-suffering. Ah *Paul*! some since have had more Yards cut out of this Patience, that have reached not only to 30, but 40, 50, 60 years.

\* Sanctus  
in locum.

2. Grace.

2.

'Tis partly for the admiration of this Grace, that God intends the day of Judgment. 'Tis a strange place, *2 Thess.* 1. 10. *When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admir'd in all them that believe, in that day.* What, has not Christ glory enough in Heaven with his Father? Will he come on purpose to

seek glory from such worthless Creatures as his Saints are? what is that which glorifies Christ in them? 'Tis the gracious work he has wrought in them. For the word is *ὁδοῦσθαι ἐν αἰσίοις*, to be inglorified in his Saints; i.e. by something within them; For which they glorify Christ *active & objective*, as the Creatures glorify the Wisdom and Power of God, by affording matter to men to do so: So doth the Work of God in Saints afford matter of praise to Angels, and admiration to Devils. The Apostle useth two words, *Glorified*, that's the work of Angels, and Saints, who shall sing out his Praises for it. As a Prince after a great Conquest receives the Congratulations of all his Nobility. *Admired*: That the very Devil and damn'd shall do; For though their Malice and Condition will not suffer them to praise him, yet his unexpressible Love in making such black insides so beautiful, shall astonish them. In this sense those things under the Earth shall bow down to that Name of Jesus, a Saviour. A Name which God gave him at first, *Phil. 2, 9, 10. Wherefore*

fore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. And upon his Exaltation did confirm, *Heb. 5. 9.* when he was made perfect, i. e. Exalted, he became the Author of Eternal Salvation, and had the power of saving, as well as the Name conferr'd upon him. They shall confess that he is Lord, *Phil. 2. 11.* i. e. that he acted like a Lord, when he prevail'd over all the opposition which those great Sinners made against him. The whole Trial of the Saints, and the Sentence of their Blessedness, shall be finished before that of the Damn'd, *Mat. 25. 35, 44.* That the whole scene of his Love, and the wonders of the work of Faith being laid open, might strike them with a vast amazement. And that this is the design of Christ, to be thus glorified in his Grace, and Power, appears by the Apostle's Prayer, *vers. 11, 12.* that the *Thessalonians* might be in the number of those Christ should be thus glorify'd in. Therefore he prays, that God would fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness,



*i. e.* that Grace he is so pleas'd and delighted to manifest, and carry on the work of Faith with power; that *the name of Christ might be glorified in them*, as well as in the rest of his Saints. Ordinary Conversion is an Act of Grace; *Barnabas* so interprets it, *Acts* 11. 21, 23. when a great number believed; what abundance of Grace then is expended in converting a company of extraordinary Sinners!

'Tis the glory of a man to pass by an offence, *Prov.* 19. 11. *i. e.* 'tis a manifestation of a Property which is an honour to him to be known to have. If it be thus an honour to pass by an offence simply, then the greater the offence is, and the more the offences are which he passeth by, the greater must the glory needs be; because it's a manifestation of such a Quality in greater strength and vigour. So it must argue a more exceeding grace in God to remit many and great sins in man, than to forgive only some few, and lesser offences.

I. *Fulness of his Grace.*

I.

He shews hereby, that there is more grace in him, than there can be sin in us, or the whole World.

He lets some Sinners run mightily upon his score, to manifest, that though they are beggar'd, yet his Grace is not. That though they have spent all their stock upon their swinish Lusts, yet they have not drain'd his Treasures; no more than the Sun is emptied of its strength, by exhaling the ill Vapours of so many Dunghils. This was his design in giving the Moral-Law, *Finis operis*, that is, the event of the Law was to encrease the Sin; but *Finis operantis*, was thereby to glorify his Grace. Rom.

5. 20. *Moreover the law entred, that the offence might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.* When

the Law of Nature was out of print, and so blurr'd that it could scarce be read, God brings the Moral-Law (the Counter-part of the Law of Nature) in a new Edition into the World; and thereby Sin hath new aggravations, as being rebellion against a clearer light,  
a swel-

a swelling, and breaking over this mighty Bank of the Law laid in its way. But this was serviceable to the fulness of his Grace, which had more abundant matter hereby to work upon, and a larger Field to sow its inexhaustible Seed in, *ὑπερπερίωδον*, it did superabound. That Grace should rise in its tide higher than Sin, and bear it down before it: Just as the rouling Tide of the Sea riseth higher than the streams of the River, and beats them back with all their mud and filth. 'Twas mercy in God to create us; 'tis *abundant mercy* to make any new Creatures, after they had forfeited their Happiness; 1 Pet. i. 3, which according to his abundant mercy, *καὶ τὸ πολὺ*, according to his much mercy. But it was *ὑπερπλεονάζουσα χάρις*, overflowing exceeding abundant, more than full Grace to make such deform'd Creatures new Creatures, v. 14. of this Chapter.

2.

2. *Freeness of Grace.*

None can entertain an imagination, that Christ should be a debtor to sin, unless in vengeance, much less a debtor

to the worst of Sinners. But if Christ should only take Persons of moral and natural Excellencies, men might suspect that Christ were some way or other engag'd to them, and that the gift of Salvation were limited to the Endowments of Nature, and the good exercise and use of a man's own Will. But when he puts no difference between Persons of the least, and those of the greatest demerit, but affecting the foulest Monsters of sin, as well as the fairest of Nature's Children, he builds triumphal Arches to his Grace upon this Rubbish, and makes Men and Angels admiringly gaze upon these infinitely free Compassions; when he takes Souls full of Boils and Sores into his Arms. For 'tis manifest hereby, that the God and Lord of Nature is no more bound to his Servant, (as touching the gift of Salvation) when she carries it the most smoothly with him, than when she rebels against him with the highest hand. And that Christ is at perfect liberty from any Conditions, but that of his own, *viz.* Faith; and that he can, and will embrace the dirt and mud, as well  
as



as well as the beauty and and varnish of Nature, if they believe with the like precious Faith.

Therefore 'tis frequently God's method in Scripture, just before the offer of Pardon, to sum up the Sinner's Debrs, with their aggravations; to convince them of their insolvency to satisfy so large a Score, and also to manifest the freeness and vastness of his Grace. *Isa.*

*43. 22, 23, 24. But thou hast not call'd upon me, O Jacob, but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel; Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt-offering, &c. but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities.* When he had told them how dirtily they had dealt with him, and would have made him a very slave to their corrupt Humours; at the conclusion, when they, nor no Creature else, but would have expected fireballs of wrath to be flung in their faces, and that God should have dipt his Pen in Gall, and have writ their *Mittimus* to Hell, he dips it in Honey, and crosseth the Debt; *v. 25. I, even I am he, that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will*

*will not remember thy sins.* Could there be any thing of merit here, when the Criminal instead of favour could expect nothing but severity, there being nothing but demerit in him?

'Tis so free, that the Mercy we abuse, the Name we have profan'd; the Name, of which we have deserved wrath, opens its mouth with Pleas for us. *Ezek. 36. 21. But I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profan'd among the heathen whither they went. Not for their sakes. It should be wholly free: For he repeats their profaning of his Name four times. This Name he would sanctify, i. e. glorify. How? v. 25. In cleansing them from their filthiness.* His Name, while it pleads for them, mentions their demerits, that Grace might appear to be Grace indeed; and triumph in its own freeness. Our sins against him cannot deserve more than our sufferings for him; and even they are not worthy of the glory which shall be revealed, *Rom. 8. 18.*

3. *Extent of his Grace.*

Mercy of God is called his Riches,  
and

3.

and exceeding Riches of Grace. Now as there is no end of his Holiness, which is his Honour ; neither any limits set to his Power : So there is no end of his Grace, which is his Wealth ; no end of his Mines : Therefore the foulest and greatest Sinners are the fittest for Christ to manifest the abundant riches of his Graces upon : For it must needs argue a more vast Estate to remit great Debts, and many thousands of Talents, than to forgive some fewer Shillings, or Pence ; than to pardon some smaller sins in men of a more unstain'd Conversation. If it were not for turning and pardoning Mountainous Sinners, we should not know so much of God's Estate. We should not know how rich he were, or what he were worth. He pardons Iniquities for his Name sake ; and who can spell all the Letters of his Name, and turn over all the Leaves in the Book of Mercy ? who shall say to his Grace, as he does to the Sea, Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further ?

As the Heavens are of a vast extension, which like a great Circle encompass the Earth, which lies in the middle  
like

like a little Atome, in comparifon of that vaſt Body of Air and Æther; ſo are our ſins to the extent of God's Mercy : *Iſa. 55. 9. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, ſo are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* Mens ſins are innumerable, yet they are but Cyphers to the vaſt Sums of Grace which are every day expended; becauſe they are finite, but Mercy is infinite; ſo that all ſins in the World put together, cannot be of ſo large an extent as Mercy: becauſe being every one of them finite, if all laid together cannot amount to infinite.

The Goſpel is intit'led *good will to men*; to all ſorts of men; with Iniquities, Tranſgreſſions and Sins, of all ſorts and ſizes. God hath ſtores of Mercy lying by him. His Exchequer is never empty, *Exod. 34. 7. Keeps mercy for thouſands,* in a readineſs to deal it upon thouſand millions of Sins, as well as millions of Perſons. *Abraham, Iſaac and Jacob,* and all that were before, have not waſted it; and if God were to proclaim his Name again, it is the ſame ſtill, for his Name as well as his Eſſence is unchangeable.

His



His Grace is no more tied to one Sin, than 'tis to one Person : He has mercy on whom he will, and his Grace can pardon what Sins he will : Therefore he tells them, *Iſa. 55. 7.* that he would *multiply Pardons* : He will have mercy to ſute every ſin of thine, and a Salve for every Sore : Though thy ſin has its heights, and depths, yet he will heap mercy upon mercy, till he makes it to over-top thy ſin. He will be as good at his merciful Arithmetick, as thou haſt been at thy ſinful, if thou doſt ſincerely repent and reform. Though thou multiply thy Sins by thouſands, where Repentance goes before, remiſſion of ſin follows without limitation ; when Chriſt gives the one, he is ſure to ſecond it with the other. Though aggravating Circumſtances be never ſo many, yet he will multiply his Mercies as faſt as thou canſt the Sins thou haſt committed.

He hath a cleaſing Virtue, and a pardoning Grace for all Iniquities and Tranſgreſſions, *Jer. 33. 8.* *And I will cleaſe them from all their iniquity, where-by they have ſinned againſt me : And I will*  
*pardon*

*pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have ſinned, and whereby they have tranſgreſſed againſt me.* 'Tis three times repeated, to ſhew, that his Mercy ſhould be as large as their Sin, though there was not a more ſinful Nation upon the Earth than they were. His Juſtifying and Sanctifying Grace ſhould have as vaſt an extention: For he would both *pardon and cleanſe* them. Why? v. 9. That it might be a *name of joy, and praiſe, and an honour* to him before all the Nations of the Earth.

'Tis ſo great, that Self-righteous Perſons murmur at it, that ſuch Swines ſhould be preferr'd before them. As the Eldeſt Son was angry that his Father ſhould lavish out his kindneſs upon the Prodigal, more than upon himſelf, *Luke 15. 28.*

4. *Compaſſionatenefs of it.*

The formal nature of Mercy is Tenderneſs, and the natural effect of it is Relief. The more miſerable the Object, the more compaſſionate Human Mercy is, and the more forward to aſſiſt. Now that Mercy which in Man is a Quality,

E

in

4.

in God is a Nature. How would the infinite tenderness of his Nature be discover'd, if there were no Objects to draw it forth? It would not be known to be Mercy, unless it were shed abroad; Nor to be tender Mercy, unless it relieved great and oppressing Miseries. For Mercy is a Quality in Man that cannot keep at home, and be stow'd under Lock and Key in a Man's own Breast. Much less in God, in whom 'tis a Nature. Now the greater the Disease, the greater is that Compassion discover'd to be, wherewith God is so fully stor'd.

As his End in letting the Devil pour out so many Afflictions upon Job, was to shew his pity and tender mercy in relieving him; *Jam. 5. 11. You have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.* So in permitting the Devil to draw his Elect to so many Sins, 'tis the same End he drives at. And he is more pitiful, to help men under Sin, than under Affliction: because the guilt of one Sin is a greater misery than the burthen of a thousand

thousand Crosses. If forgiveness be a part of tenderness in Man, 'tis also so in God, who is set, *Eph. 4. 32.* as a Pattern of the Compassion we are to shew to others. And be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

The lower a man is brought, the more tender is that Mercy that relieves him; *Psal. 79. 8.* Let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are brought very low.

To visit them that sit in darkness, and the shadow of death, and to pardon their sins, is call'd mercy with this Epithete of tender; *Luke 1. 77, 78, 79.* Through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us. And so 'tis indeed, when he visits the most forlorn Sinners.

5. Sincerity, and pleasure of his Grace.

5.

Ordinary pardon proceeds from his delight in mercy, *Mich. 7. 18.* Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity,



and paſſeth by the tranſgreſſion of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, becauſe he delighteth in mercy. Therefore the more of his Grace he lays out upon any one, the more exceſs of delight he hath in it; becauſe 'tis a larger effect of that Grace. If he were not ſincere in it, he would never mention mens Sins, which would ſcare them from him, rather than allure them to him. If he were not ſincere, he would never change the heart of an Enemy, and ſhew kindneſs to him in the very act of enmity: For the firſt act of Grace upon us is quite againſt our wills. And man is ſo far from being active in it, that he is contrary to it. *In primo actionis*, 'tis thus with a man, though not *in primo actu*: For in the firſt act of Conversion, man is willing, though not in the firſt moment of that Act. But for God to beſtow his Grace upon us againſt our wills, and when he can expect no ſuitable recompence from us, evidences the purity of his Affection; That when he endured ſo many contradictions of Sinners againſt himſelf, day by day, yet he

he is resolv'd to have them, and does seize upon them, though they struggle and fly in his face, and provoke him to sling them off.

'Tis so much his delight, that 'tis call'd by the very name of his glory; *Isa 58.8. The glory of the Lord shall follow thee*, i. e. The Mercy of the Lord should follow them at the very heels. And when they call, it should answer them; and when they cry, he would, like a watchful guardian Servant, cry out, Here I am. So that he never lets a great Sinner, when chang'd into a Penitent, wait long for mercy; though he sometimes lets them wait long for a sense of it. This Mercy is never so delightful to him, as when 'tis most glorious; and 'tis most glorious, when it takes hold of the worst Sinners. For such Black Spots which Mercy wears upon its face, makes it appear more beautiful.

Christ does not care for staying, where he has not opportunities to do great Cures, suitable to the vastness of his Power, *Mark 6 5*. When he was in his own Country, he could do no great

Work there, but only laid his hands upon a few sick People. He had not a suitable Employment for that glorious Power of working Miracles. So when men come to Christ with lighter guilt, he has but an under-opportunity given him, and with a kind of disadvantage, to manifest the greatness of his Charity. Though he has so much Grace and Mercy, yet he cannot shew more than the nature and exigence of the opportunity will bear; and so his Pleasure doth not swell so high, as otherwise it would do. For little Sins, and few Sins, are not so fit an Object for a Grace that would ride in triumph. Free Grace is God's Darling, which he loves to advance; and 'tis never more advanc'd, than when it beautifies the most mis-shapen Souls.

3.

*3. Power.*

The Scripture makes Conversion a wonderful Work, and resembles it to Creation, and the Resurrection of Christ from the dead, &c.

1.

*1. Creation.* Conversion simply consider'd, is concluded by Divines to be a greater

greater Work than Creation: For God puts forth more Power morally in Conversion, than he did physically in Creation. The World was Created by a Word; but many Words, and many Acts concur to Conversion.

The Heavens are call'd the Works of God's Fingers, *Psal.* 8. 3. But the Gospel in the effects of it, is call'd the Arm of the Lord; *Isa.* 53. 1. Men put not their Arm to a thing, but when the Work requires more strength than the Fingers possess. 'Tis the power of God to Salvation; and the faith it works is begun and fulfill'd with power, 2 Thess. I. II.

God created the World of nothing; nothing could not objectively contribute to his Design, as Matter does to a Workman's Intent; yet neither doth it oppose him, because 'tis nothing. As soon as God spake the word, this Nothing brings forth Sun, Moon, Stars, Earth, Trees, Flowers, all the garnish of Nature out of its barren Womb. But Sin is actively disobedient, disputes his Commands, flights his Power, fortifies



tifies it self against his entrance upon the heart, gives not up an inch of ground without a contest. There is not only a passive indisposition, but an active opposition. His Creating Power drew the World out of nothing, but his Converting Power frames the New Creature out of something worse than nothing.

Naturally there is nothing but darkness and confusion in the Soul; we have not the least spark of divine light, no more than the Chaos had, when God commanded light to shine out of that darkness, 2 Cor. 4. 6. *shin'd* in our hearts. To bring a principle of light into the heart, and to set it up in spight of all the opposition that the Devil, and a man's own Corruption makes, is greater than Creation. As the power of the Sun is more seen in scattering the thickest Mists that triumph over the Earth, and mask the face of the Heavens, than in melting the small Clouds compacted of a few Vapors; so it must needs argue a greater strength to root out those great Sins that were twisted and inlaid with our very Nature, and become as dear

dear to us as our right Eye, and right Hand, than a few Sins that have taken no deep root. Every man naturally is possess'd with a hatred of God, and doth oppose every thing which would restore God to his right : And being since the Fall fill'd with a desire of independency, which is daily strengthn'd with new recruits, and loth to surrender himself to the power and direction of another : 'Tis a more difficult thing to tame this unruly disposition in man's heart, I say more difficult than to annihilate him, and new create him again. As 'tis more easie oftentimes for an Artificer to make a new piece of Work, than to repair and patch up an old one that is out of frame.

2. *Resurrection.* Conversion simply is so call'd, *Eph. 2. 5. quickned us when we were dead.* And the Power that effects it; is the same Power that rais'd Christ from the dead ; which was a mighty Power, that could remove the Stone from the Grave, when Christ lay with all the Sins of the World upon him ; *Eph. 1. 19, 20.* So the greater the

2.

the Stone is upon them, the greater is God's Power to remove it.

For if it be the Power of God simply to regenerate Nature, and to put a new Law into the heart, and to qualify the Will with a new byas to comply with this Law; and to make them that could not endure any thoughts of Grace, not to endure any thoughts of Sin; 'Tis a greater Power sure to raise a man from that death, wherein he has lain thirty or forty years rotten and putrified in the Grave; For if Conversion in its own nature be Creation and Resurrection, this must needs be Creation and Resurrection with an Emphasis.

The more malignant any Distemper is, and the more fix'd in the vital Parts, and complicated with other Diseases, the greater is the Power in curing it: For a Disease is more easily checkt at the first invasion, than when it has infected the whole mass of Blood, and become Chronical; so 'tis more to pull up a Sin, or many Sins, that have spread their Roots deep, and stood against the shock of many blustering winds of threat-

threatnings, than that which is but a Twig, and newly planted.

3. *Traction or drawing.* Drawing implies a strength. If Conversion be a Traction, then more strength is required to draw one that is bound to a Post by great Cables, than one that is only tied by a few Packthreads; one that has millions of Weights upon him, than one that hath but a few Pounds.

4. 'Tis the only Miracle Christ hath left standing in the World, and declares him more to be Christ than any thing. When John sent to know what he was, Luke 7. 20. he returns no other account but a list of his Miracles; and that which brings up the Rear as the greatest, is, the poor, *οὐκ ἐλπίζοντες*, are Evangeliz'd. 'Tis not to be taken actively, of the Preaching the Gospel; but passively, they were wrought upon by the Gospel, and became Gospel'd People, transformed into the Mould of it.

For else it would bear no analogy to the other Miracles. The Deaf heard, and the Dead were rais'd; they had not only Exhortations to hear, but the effects were wrought upon them. So these



these words import not only the preaching of the Gospel to them, but the powerful operation of the Gospel in them. 'Tis not so great a work to raise many thousands kill'd in a Battel, as to *gospellize* one dead Soul. 'Tis a miracle of Power to transform a ravenous Wolf into a gentle Lamb, a furious Lyon into a meek Dove, a nasty Sink into a clear Fountain, a stinking Weed into a fragrant Rose, a Toad or Viper into a Man endued with Rational Faculties and Moral Endowments; and so to transform a filthy Swine into a King and Priest unto God. In Conquests of this nature does Divine Power appear glorious. 'Tis some strength to polish a rough Stone taken out of the Quarry, and hew it into the Statue of a great Prince; but more to make this Statue a living Man. Worse Stones than these doth God make Children, not only to *Abraham*, but to himself, even the *Gentiles* which were accounted \* Stones by the *Jews*, and are call'd Stones in Scripture for the worshipping Idols.

\* Grot.  
Mat. 3. 9.

What Power must that be, which can stop the Tide of the Sea, and make it suddenly

suddenly recoil back? what vast Power must that be, that can change a black Cloud into a glorious Sun? This, and more doth God do in Conversion. He doth not only take smooth Pieces of the softest Matter, but the ruggedest Timber full of Knots, to plain and shew both his Strength and Art upon.

4. *Wisdom.*

4.

The work of Grace being a new Creation, is not only an Act of God's Power, but of his Wisdom; as the Natural Creation was. As he did in contriving the Platform of Grace, and in bringing Christ upon the Stage, so also in the particular distributions of it, he acts according to Counsel, and that Infinite too, even the Counsel of his own Will, *Eph. 1. 11.* The Apostle having discoursed before, *v. 9.* of God's making known the Mystery of his Will in and through Christ: And *v. 11.* of the dispensation of this Grace, in bestowing an Inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him, *who works all things according to the counsel of his own will*: He doth not say, God predestinated

destinated us according to the Counsel of his own Will, but refers it to all he had said before, *viz.* of his making known the Mystery of Christ, and their obtaining an Inheritance. And *v.* 8. speaking before of the pardon of Sin in the Blood of Christ, according to the riches of God's Grace, wherein, saith he, *He hath abounded towards us in all wisdom* : As there was abundance of Grace set apart, to be dealt out, so there was abundance of Wisdom, even all God's Wisdom employ'd in the distribution of it. The restoring of God's Image requires at least as much Wisdom, as the first Creating of it. And the application of Redemption, and bestowing of Pardoning and Converting Grace, is as much an Act of God's Prudence, as the Contrivance of it was of his Counsel.

Grace, or a gracious Man in respect of his grace, is call'd God's *workmanship*, *Eph. 2. 10* *ποίημα*, not *ἔργον*; Work of his Art, as well as strength and operation of his Mind as well as his Hand. His *Poem*, not barely a Work of Omnipotency, but an intellectual Spark. A

new

new Creature is a curious Piece of Divine Art, fashion'd by God's Wisdom to set forth the praise of the Framers. As a Poem is by a Man's Reason and Fancy, to publish the Wit and Parts of the Composer.

'Tis a great Skill of an Artificer, with a mixture of a few Sands and Allies, by his breath to blow up such a clear and diaphanous body as Glass, and frame several Vessels of it for several uses. 'Tis not barely his breath that does it, for other men have breath as well as he; but 'tis breath manag'd by Art. And is it not a marvellous Skill in God, to make a miry Soul so pure and chrySTALLINE on a sudden; to endue a Swine with a Divine Nature, and by a powerful word to frame so beautiful a Medal as a new Creature is?

The more intricate and knotty any Business is, the more eminent is a man's Ability in effecting it. The more desperate the Wound is, the more honourable is the Chyrurgion's Ability in the Cure. Christ's healing a Soul that is come to the last gasp, and given over by all for lost, shews more of Art,



Art, than setting right an ordinary Sinner.

Our Apostle takes notice of the Wisdom of God in his own Conversion here ; For when he relates the History of it, he breaks out into an Hallelujah, and sends up a Volley of Praises to God for the grace he had obtain'd. And in that Doxology, he puts an Emphasis on the Wisdom of God, *v. 17. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour, and glory, for ever and ever. Only Wise God ; Only,* which he does not add to any other Attribute, he there gives him.

This Wisdom appears,

- I. *1. In the Subjects he chuseth ;* we'll go no further than the Example in our Text. Our Apostle seems to be a man full of heat and zeal. And the Church already had felt the smart of his Activity ; insomuch, that they were afraid to come at him after his change, or to admit him into their company, imagining that his Fury was not chang'd, but disguis'd ; and he of an open Persecutor, turn'd Trepaner, *Acts 9. 26.* None can express

express better what a Lyon he was than he doth himself; *Acts 26. 10, 11.* Many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief Priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every Synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities. He seems also to have been a Man of a high and ambitious Spirit. This Persecuting probably was acted so vigorously by him, to ingratiate himself with the Chief Priests, and as a means to step into Preferment; for which he was endued with Parts, and Learning, and would not want Zeal and Industry to attain it. He seems to be of a proud Spirit, by the temptation which he had, *2 Cor. 12. 7.* lest I should be exalted above measure. He speaks it twice in that Verse, intimating that his Natural Disposition led him to be lifted up with any Excellency he had: And usually God doth direct his Battery to beat down that which is the Sin of our Constitution.

He was a man of a very honest mind, and was forward in following every Point his Conscience directed him to : For what he did against Christ, he did according to the Dictates of his Conscience, as then inform'd, *Acts 26. 9. I verily thought with my self, i. e. in my Conscience, that I ought, not that I might, but that it was his Duty.* His Error commanded with the same power that Truth does where it reigns.

Now it discovers the Wisdom of God to lay hold of this man, thus temper'd, who had honesty to obey the Dictates of a rightly inform'd Conscience, as well as those of an Erroneous one ; Zeal to execute them, and height of Spirit to preserve his Activity from being blunted by any opposition ; and Parts and Prudence for the management of all these. I say, to turn these Affections and Excellencies to run in a heavenly Channel, and to guide this Natural Passion and Heat for the service and advancement of that Interest which before he endeavour'd to destroy, and for the propagation of that Gospel which before he persecuted, is an effect  
of

of a wonderful Wisdom; As 'tis a Rider's Skill to order the Mettle of a headstrong Horse for his own use, to carry him on in his Journey.

2. *This Wisdom appears in the Time.*

2.

As Man's Wisdom doth consist as well in timing his Actions, as contriving the models of them; so doth God's. He lays hold of the fittest Opportunities to bring his wonderful Providences upon the Stage. He hath his *set time* to deliver his Church from her Enemies, *Psal. 102. 13.* And he hath his *set time* also to deliver every particular Soul, that he intends to make a Member of his Church, from the Devil. He waits the fittest Season to manifest his Grace, *Isa. 30. 18. Therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you.* Why? For the Lord is a God of judgment, i. e. a God of Wisdom: Therefore will time things for the best advantage, both of his glory, and the Sinner's good. His timing of his Grace was excellent in the Conversion of Paul.



1.

1. *In respect of himself.*

There could not be a fitter time to glorify his Grace, than when *Paul* was almost got to the length of his Chain ; almost to the Sin against the Holy Ghost. For if he had had but a little more light , and done that out of malice , which he did out of ignorance, he had been lost for ever. He obtain'd mercy , why ? because he did it *ignorantly*, v. 13. As I said before, he follow'd the dictates of his Conscience : For if he had had knowledge suitable to his fury, it had been the unpardonable Sin. Christ suffer'd him to run to the brink of Hell , before he laid hold upon him.

2.

2. *In respect of others.*

He is converted at such a time, when he went as full of madness as a Toad of Poyson, to spit it out against the poor Christians at *Damascus* ; arm'd with all the Power and Credential Letters the High Priest could give him, who without question promised himself much from his industry. And when he was  
almost

almost at his Journey's end, ready to execute his Commission, *Acts* 9. 3. And as he journied, he came near *Damascus*. About half a mile from the City, as *Gulielmus Tyrius* thinks \* ; At this very time Christ grapples with him, outwrestles all his Bedlam Principles, secures *Paul* from Hell, and his Disciples from their fears of him. Behold the Nature of this Hawk chang'd, just as he was going to fasten upon the Partridge. \* Turin. in loc.

Christ might have converted *Paul* sooner, either when *Paul* had heard of some of his Miracles; for perhaps *Paul* was resident at *Jerusalem* at the time of Christ's preaching in *Judaea*: For he was brought up in *Jerusalem* at the Feet of *Gamaliel*, *Acts* 22. 3. who was one of the Council, *Acts* 5. 34. He might have converted him when he heard *Stephen* make that Elegant and Convincing Oration in his own defence, *Acts* 7. Or when he saw *Stephen's* Constancy, Patience and Charity in his Suffering; which might somewhat have startled a moral Man, as *Paul* was, and made him look about him.

But Christ omits the doing of it at all these Opportunities, and suffers him to kick against the pricks of Miracles, Admonitions and Arguments of Stephen and others: Yet hath his Eye upon him all along in a special manner, *Acts 7. 58.* He is there nam'd, when none else are; *witnesses laid their clothes at a young man's feet, nam'd Saul.* And *Acts 8. 1.* *Saul was consenting to his death;* was there none else that had a hand in it? The Spirit of God takes special notice of *Saul* here; he runs in God's mind, yet God would not stop his fury. And *Acts 8. 3.* *As for Saul, he made havock of the Church.*

Did no body else shew as much Zeal and Cruelty as *Saul*? sure he must have some Instruments with him; yet we hear none nam'd but *Saul*. And *Act 9. 1.* *Saul yet breathing, &c.* yet, as much as to say, he shall not do so long. I shall have a fit time to meet with him presently.

And was it not a fit time, when the Devil hop'd to rout the Christians by him? when the High Priests assur'd themselves success from this man's passionate

sionate Zeal, when the Church travelled with throws of fear of him. But Christ sent the Devil sneaking away for the loss of such an active Instrument, frustrates all the Expectations of the High Priests, and calms all the stormy Fears of his Disciples: For Christ sets him first a preaching at *Damascus* in the very Synagogues which were to assist him in his cruel Design, *Acts* 9 20, 22. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the son of God, and increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at *Damascus*, proving that this is very Christ.

Did not Christ shew himself to be a God of Judgment here? He sat watching in Heaven for this Season, to turn *Paul* with the greatest advantage. His Wisdom answers many Ends at once, and kill'd so many Birds with one Stone. He struck dead at one blow *Paul's* Sin, his Peoples Fears, the High Priest's Expectations, and the Devil's Hopes. He triumphs over his Enemies, secures his Friends, saves *Paul's* Soul, and promotes his Interest by him; he disap-



points the Devil of his Expectations, and Hell of her longing.

3.

3. This Wisdom appears, *to keep up the Credit of Christ's Death.*

The great Excellency of Christ's Sacrifice, wherein it transcends the Sacrifices under the Law, is, because it perfectly makes an atonement for all Sins; It first satisfies God, and then calms the Conscience, which they could not do, *Heb. 10. 1, 2.* for there was a conscience of Sin after their Sacrifices. The tenor of the Covenant of Grace which God makes with his People, is upon the account of this Sacrifice, *Heb. 10. 16, 17. This is the covenant I will make with them. V. 17. And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more; Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.* This Covenant extends not only to little Sins, for there is no limitation; great Sins are included; Therefore Christ satisfied for great Sins, or else if ever they be pardon'd, there must be another Sacrifice, either of himself, or some other, which the Apostle, upon the account of this Covenant, asserts there

there need not be ; because this Sacrifice was compleat, otherwise there would be a remembrance of Sin : As the Covenant implied the compleatness of Christ's Satisfaction, so the continual fulfilling or application of the tenor of the Covenant, implies the perpetual favour and force of this Sacrifice.

And indeed when God deliver'd him up, he intended it for the greatest Sins. *Rom. 4. 25. He was deliver'd for our offences, παραπτώματα*, which signifies not stumbling, but falling. Not a light, but a great transgression. Now if Christ's Death be not satisfactory for great Debts, Christ must be too weak to perform what God intended by him, and so Infinite Wisdom was frustrate of its Intention, which cannot, nor ought not to be imagin'd. Now therefore God takes the greatest Sinners to shew,

I. First the *Value of this Sacrifice.*

I.

If God should only entertain men of a lighter guilt, Christ's Death would be suspected to be too low a Ransom for Monstrous Enormities ; and that his Treasure was sufficient for the satisfaction

tion of smaller Debts, but a penury of Merit to discharge Talents ; which had not been a Design suitable to the grandeur of Christ, or the infiniteness of that Mercy God proclaims in his Word. But now the Conversion of Giantlike Sinners doth credit the Atonement which Christ made ; and is a great renewed Approbation of the infinite Value of it, and its equivalency to God's Demands : For it bears some analogy to the Resurrection of Christ, which was God's general Acquittance to Christ, to evidence the sufficiency of his Payment. And the justification of every Sinner is a branch of that Acquittance given to Christ at his Resurrection ; *Rom. 4. 25. Rais'd again for our justification.* And a particular Acquittance to Christ for that particular Soul he had the charge of from his Father. All that Power that works in the first creation of Grace, or the progress of Regeneration, bears some proportion to the acquitting and approving Power manifested in Christ's Resurrection. *Eph. 1. 19, 20. And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward, who believe according to the working of*

of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he rais'd him from the dead. In v. 17, 18. the Apostle prays for the carrying on the work of Grace and Regeneration begun in them, that they might more clearly understand that Power which wrought in Christ; viz. that approving Power of what Christ has done, which he exerts daily in Conversion, and in the effects of it. For by raising any Soul from a death in Sin, God doth evidence the particular value of Christ's Blood for that Soul, as he did in raising Christ, evidence the general fulness of that Satisfaction. And this he will do even to the end of the World, Eph. 2. 6, 7. *rais'd us up together with Christ: — Kindness through Christ Jesus.* All his Grace in all Ages, even to the end of the World, shall run through this Channel, to put Credit and Honour upon Christ. Now the greater the Sin is that is pardon'd, and the greater the Sinner is that is converted, the more it shews the sufficiency of the Price Christ paid.

2. The



2.

2. *The Virtue of this Sacrifice.*

He is a Priest for ever, Heb. 7. 17. and therefore the Virtue as well as the Value of his Sacrifice remains for ever: He hath obtained an *eternal redemption*, Heb. 9. 12. i. e. a Redemption of an Eternal Efficacy.

As long as men receive any Venom from the fiery Serpent, they may be healed by the Antitype of the Brazen one, though it were so many years since he was lifted up. And those who are stung all over, as well as those who are bitten but in one part, may by a believing looking upon him, draw virtue from him as diffusive as their Sin.

Now the new Conversions of Men of extraordinary guilt, proclaims to the world, that the fountain of his Blood is inexhaustible; that the virtue of it is not spent, and drain'd, though so much hath been drawn out of it for these Five thousand years and upwards for the cleansing of Sins past before his coming, and Sins since his Death. This evidences that his Priesthood now is of as much efficacy as his Sufferings on Earth

Earth were valuable; and that his Merit is as much in virtue above our Iniquity, as his Person is in excellency above our Nothingness. He can wash the Tawny *American*, as well as the Moral Heathen; and make the Black *Ethiopian* as white as the most Virtuous Philosopher. God fastens upon the worst of Men sometimes, to adorn the Cross of Christ; and maketh them Eminent Testimonies of the power of Christ's Death. *He made his grave with the wicked, Isa. 53. 9. Heb. He shall give the Wicked (not Grave) and the rich in his death.* God shall make Man wallowing in sinful Pleasures, tied to the Blandishments and Profits of the World, to come to Christ, and comply with him, to be standing Testimonies in all Ages of the Virtue of his Sufferings.

4. *For the fruitfulness of this Grace in the Converts themselves.* The most rugged Souls prove most eminent in Grace upon their Conversion, as the most Orient Diamonds in *India*, which are naturally more rough, are most bright and sparkling when cut and smooth'd.

Men

4.

Men usually sprout up in stature after shattering Agues.

It increaseth,

i.

1. *Thankfulness.*

Converts only are fit to shew forth the Praises of Christ, 1 Pet. 2. 9. *That you should shew forth the praises of him, who hath call'd you out of darkness into his marvellous light; ἀρεταίς, the Virtues of Christ.* The end why God sets Men at liberty from Prisons and Dungeons, and from fear of Death and Condemnation for great Sins, is, that they may be fitted, and gain a commodious standing; to publish to the World the Virtues of him; i. e. the Mercy, Meekness, Patience, Bounty, Truth, and other Royal Perfections of Christ.

Men at their first Conversion receive the Grace of God with astonishment; for 'tis *θαυμάσιον φῶς*, 1 Pet. 2. 9. most amazing at the first appearance of it; as the Northern Nations that want the Sun for some Months in the Winter, are ready to Deify it when it appears in their Horizon: For the thicknes of the foregoing Darkness makes the lustre of the Sun

Sun more admirable. But suppose a man had been all his life-time like a Mole under ground, and had never seen so much as the light of a Candle, and had a view of that weak Light at a distance, how would he admire it, when he compares it with his former Darknes? But if he should be brought further, to behold the Moon with its train of Stars, his Amazement would increase with the Light. But let this Person behold the Sun, be touched with its warm Beams, and enjoy the pleasure of seeing those Rarities which the Sun discovers, he will bless himself, adore it, and embrace that Person that led him to enjoy such a Benefit. And the blackness of that Darknes he sat in before, will endear the present Splendor to him, swell up such a spring tide of astonishment, as that there shall be no more spirit in him.

God lets men sit long in the shadow of death, and run to the utmost of Sin, before he stops them, that their Danger may enhance their Deliverance.

We



We admire more when we are pull'd out of danger, than when we are prevented from running into it. A Malefactor will be more thankful for a Pardon, when it comes just as he is going to be turn'd off. If there be degrees of Harmony in Heaven, without question the Convert Thief on the Cross warbles out louder Notes than others, because he had little time to do it on Earth; and his Engagements are the greater, because Christ took him in his Arms when he was hanging over Hell.

When *Paul* writ this Epistle to *Timothy*, he was about 55 years of age, and yet those 20 years run out since his Conversion had not stifted his Admiration, nor damp't his Thankfulness for Converting Grace. Take a prospect of it in this Chapter, v. 12, 13. *And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the Ministry, who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious. I thank Christ Jesus our Lord. He seems to set his Sin and God's Mercy in opposition. I was Injurious, but I obtain'd mercy. I was a Blasphemer, but*

but I obtained, &c. I——mercy. Who would imagine, but that of all Perſons he ſhould have paſt by me, while he had taken this or that poliſhed *Phariſee*, this or that Doctor of Morality? but that he ſhould overlook them, and ſet his eye upon me, ſo injurious, ſuch a Blaſphemer, ſuch a Perſecutor! A great Sinner, when he reflects upon his Sin, wonders that a *But* was not made at him. You find that no Apoſtle gives ſuch Epithetes to the Grace of God as our Apoſtle does. None ſo Seraphical in his admiring Expreſſions. Riches of Grace, Exceeding Riches of Grace, Abundant Grace, Riches of Glory, Unſearchable Riches of Grace. He never ſpeaks of Grace without an Emphaſis. Single Grace, and ſingle Mercy would not ſerve his turn.

2. *Love and Affection.*

*Mary Magdalen*, out of whom Chriſt had caſt ſeven Devils, was moſt early in her affection, to beſtow her proviſion of Spices upon the dead Body of her Saviour. The fire of Grace cannot be ſtiſſed, but will break out in glory to  
G God.

God. This is such a Grace, that Man in innocency could not have exercis'd in such a height; because now the Sinner is not only in his own sight unworthy of pardon, but worthy of the greatest hatred and punishment. You scarce find your selves possessed with greater affection to any, than those who have been Instruments to free you from your sinful Fetters. How often do you bless them, could pull out your Eyes for them, and think all ways too little to manifest the sense of your obligations to them! And doth the Instrument carry away all? surely God has the greatest Sacrifice of Affection, when the Convert considers that his powerful Grace was the principal Agent to draw him out of this spiritual Mire. As when a Present is sent to you, you shew a Courtesy to the Servant, but the chief part of your kindness is devoted to the Master that sent him. What flames of Love, raptures of Joy, transports of Affection, boilings of Courage for God in a young Convert! The Soul is most courageous for God at first Conversion, because 'tis then most stor'd with  
Com-

Comforts ; and is so struck into amazement at the marvellous light which darts upon him, that he is ambitious to be a Martyr for God presently ; *H. b. 1p. 32.* *After that you were illuminated, you endured a great fight of afflictions.* Grace is not only attended with Afflictions, but bestows a Courage upon a Convert to endure them. The Soul then thinks it is able to undergo any thing for God, who hath bestow'd so much Grace upon it.

A Christian hath the greatest love to Christ at the first turning to him : For since the horror of all his Sins, and the natural ugliness and deformity of that which he has serv'd so long, comes with a full sense upon him ; And since the admirable Excellency of Christ shines upon him, which is a sight he was never acquainted with before ; the greatness of the danger he was in, and the incomparable love which beams upon him from his believing a Saviour, fills his Affection with full Sails.

Thus do men, who have been tossed in a dangerous Tempest, afflicted with the darkness of the night, as well as



their danger, rejoice, and welcome the Rising Sun in the Morning, which dispels their tumultuous Fears, as well as those gloomy Shadows.

God permits a man's Sins to abound, that his Love after pardon may abound too; *Luke 7. 47. Her sins which are many, are forgiven: for she loved much. &c.* Therefore, 'tis the consequent, not the cause of remission. And this interpretation agrees best with the following words, *To whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.* 'Tis more consonant to Reason, that where there are greater Mercies, there should be greater returns of Affection. Remission of Sins is the greatest evidence of God's Love, and therefore should be the greatest incentive of ours. And indeed Christ never appears to a Penitent with a more comely air in his Countenance, than upon the removal of great Judgments, or the pardon of great Sins. *Isa. 4. 2. In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely, for them that are escaped of Israel. In that day, in what day? After great Judgments,*

ments, v. 1. and in the foregoing Chapter, in purging away great filth, v. 4. The Branch Jeſus appears moſt lovely, when he comes laden with the fruit of Grace, with the ſanctifying juice of his Blood; as a ripe bunch of Grapes looks pleaſantly in a thirſty Traveller's Eye. This Convert *Paul* was more affectionate to Chriſt than any of the other Apoſtles: For when he could not look upon him, he is enamour'd on his very Name, and delights to expreſs it no leſs than 500 times, as, I remember ſome have numbred it in his Epiſtles; more proportionably than *Peter*, *James* and *John* did in what they writ.

3. *Service and Obedience.*

3.

Such will endeavour to redeem the time, becauſe their former days have been ſo evil, and recover thoſe advantages of Service, which they loſt by a courſe of Sin. They will labour that the largeneſs of their Sin may be answered by an extenſion of their Zeal. Such will be almoſt as much aſham'd to do but common ſervice, as they are now aſham'd of their ſcarlet Sins. As Men, the further they go backward, the greater leap

they usually take forward. Grace instructs a man in holiness out of gratitude.

*Tit. 2. 12.* The Grace of God teacheth us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, that we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. Grace teacheth us. The greater the Grace, the more pressing is the Instruction; as it doth increase gratitude, it doth increase service. That *Peter*, who had been so criminal in denying his Master, and adding Perjury to his Perfidiousness, was as active in service, as he had been in apostacy. He laid the first Stone of the Christian Church among the *Jews* after Christ's Ascension: He preached the first Sermon to them, and charg'd them home with his Master's Murther, *Act. 2.* He was also the Spokesman in all business, describ'd in the first six Chapters of the *Acts*. He laid also the first foundation of the *Gentile* Church; For God in a Vision revealed to him the calling of the *Gentiles*, passing by all the other Apostles, to whom it was not known but by *Peter's* Relation \*, *Acts 15. 7.* *Men and brethren, ye know how that a good*

\* Camer.  
on Myro. in  
*Acts 15. 7.*

good while ago, God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should bear the word of the gospel, and believe. A good while ago, which good while ago refers to the time *Matt. 16. 18.* wherein Christ said, *Upon this Rock will I build my Church.* He was chosen by God to this purpose, *i. e.* separated from the rest of the Apostles, and adorn'd with this Prerogative. Great Sins did not make Christ change his Resolution.

Never an Apostle that had been bred up under Christ's Wing, that was so active an Instrument as this *Paul*, who had been so bitter an Enemy. He labour'd more abundantly than all, *1 Cor. 15. 10.* In matters of obedience he would not ask counsel of Flesh and Blood, *Gal. 1. 16.* *Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.* He was quick in his obedience. He had endeavour'd to weaken Christ's Kingdom; he now endeavours to list men in his Service. He had breathed out Threatnings, he now breathes out Affections; He could even spend and be spent for the interest of his Saviour. And usually we find con-



verted Souls most active in the exercise of that Grace which is most contrary to that which was their darling Sin.

4.

4. *Humility and Self-emptiness.*

Christ chose the *foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty*, 1 Cor. 1. 26, 27. that nothing should be attributed to their Worth and Dignity, but to his Grace and Mercy. Were the Gospel discover'd only to the wise, they would look upon it rather as a discovery made by the Opticks of their own Reason. And if God did bestow his Grace only upon men of unspotted Conversations, they would rather think it a debt God stood obliged to pay them, than a free act of Grace. As God reveals knowledge to the simplest, *Matth. 2. 25.* so he doth manifest Grace to the sinfullest; and as Christ blest his Father for that, so no doubt but he doth return the same thanks for this. Such great Sinners receive all from God, and so have more reason to hang down their heads; others may sometimes cast many a loving  
look

look to their own Righteousness, and like *Nebuchadnezzar*, glory, This is the *Babylon* which I have built; and boast of their good Acts, and freedom from the common Pollutions of the World.

But such who were fallen over head and ears in the mire, and were dirty all over, have no cause to boast: For God did not find them, but made them worthy. They brought nothing but Dirt and Rags, that were not worthy the washing; only God would pick glory out of their worthlessness, to his own Grace. Such are sensible, that God was not their debtor, but they his; and that there was nothing in them to oblige God to bestow the least Mite of mercy on them.

Therefore we find not one of these mountainous Sinners in Scripture ascribing their Conversion to their own strength or merit.

As no Apostle was so God-magnifying, so none was so Self-vilifying as *Paul*; though he was the greatest Apostle, yet he accounts himself less than the least of all Saints, *Eph. 3. 8.* Unto me who am less than the least of all saints.  
Surely

Surely he might have put himself equal to the least, it would have been great humility to do so; but he is more humble than so, even less than the least; less even than him who was only fit to be a Door-keeper in the House of God. And he esteems himself not only unworthy of the Office of an Apostle, but of the very Name, *1 Cor. 15. 9. Not worthy, not only to be, but to be call'd an Apostle.* And why? because of his former Sin; because *I persecuted the Church of God.* The remembrance of his great Sin before his Conversion, kept him humble. And in *v. 10.* when he had a little boasted of his abundant labour, he checks himself presently, *yet not I, but the grace of God.* He attributes his very being as a Christian, as well as his Actions, to the same Cause, *viz. the Grace of God; by Grace I am what I am.* So *Gal. 1. 16.* how doth Paul attribute to Grace; *pleased by his grace, reveal; Revelation, not Acquisition.*

5.

5. *Bewailing of Sin, and self-abhorrancy for it.*

When Men are first translated out  
of

of darknes into the Kingdom of Christ, and begin to know Christ truly, the ways of their former ignorance are very bitter and uncouth things unto them. The very disproportion and unsuitableness of them to the sweetness of that Grace, which now they taste from the hand of Jesus, is an offence to them, and hateful to their thoughts. Therefore the more Sin a man hath run into before his return to God, the more he sees the vileness of his own Nature, and consequently the more he abhors himself. *Ezek. 36. 31. Then shall you remember your iniquities, and shall loath your selves.* When? *v. 29.* when God had accomplish'd the Promise of saving them from all their uncleanness. They shall remember with abhorrency what was their own Sin, and shall enjoy what is purely God's.

Time of pardoning great Sins, is the time of great Self-loathing; such prove the holiest Persons, because they have had more experience of the Evil of Sin.

Such are ashamed of their Sins not only at the instant of their Conversion, but



but afterwards, every time they remember them; *Rom. 6. 21. What fruit had you then in those things whereof you are now asham'd?* Now, at that time, when *Paul* writ to them; the very shame of their Sins stuck upon them, though they had been converted before. The more they grew in the experimental knowledge of God and his goodness, the more a holy shame for Sins committed in their natural condition was stirr'd in their Consciences; and they could not but blush every time they consider'd how dirty they had been towards God. Now the greater the shame, the greater the hatred of the occasion of that shame, and the more exact the watchfulness against it. As a man that hath fallen into some Slough by some stumble or over-sight, when he travels that way again, he cannot but remember what a pickle he was in, and will be watchful lest he meet with the same mishap. Whose heart was more melted by mercy than *Mary Magdalen's*? All the *Pharisees* that Christ converted never rain'd such showers of Tears; How she useth all her Instruments of Sin to be Servants  
to

to her Repentance ! Her Eyes, which had enflam'd ſo many Hearts, been Snares to catch men, ſhe makes the Conduits to convey her penitential Tears to her Saviour's Feet. Her Hair, which had engroſs'd ſo much time in the curioſity of Drefſes, ſhe uſes as a Towel to wipe them. The Ointment ſhe had us'd for the tricking up her ſelf, to gratify the Senſes of her Lovers, ſhe pours out to embalm her Lord. Her Luſts ſhould have no more of her choiceſt things, but her Saviour ſhould have all. She would keep them not ſo much for her own uſe, as his.

6. *Faith and Dependance.*

6.

1. *At preſent in the inſtant of the firſt act of Faith.*

1.

Great Sins makes us appear in the Court of Juſtification, *ſub forma impii*, with a naked Faith, when we have nothing to merit it, but much to deſerve the contrary, *Rom. 4. 5.* — *believes on him that juſtifies the ungodly.* The more ungodly, the more elevated is that Faith which lays hold on God. *Thomas* his unbe-

unbelief was very black, for he had refus'd to give credit to all the Testimonies of the Disciples concerning Christ's Resurrection; but when he was sensible of his Crime, and so kindly dealt with by his Saviour, he puts forth a stronger act of Faith than any of the rest, *Joh. 20. 28. My Lord, and my God!* His Faith was not satisfi'd with a single *my*; he gives him more honourable Titles, and his heart grasps him more closely and affectionately than any of the rest.

The man that was born blind, and cur'd by Christ, owns him, acts some Faith before the *Pharisees*, *Job. 9. 33. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing, v. 39.* And he said, *I believe*, and he worshipped him. But when Christ comes to talk with him particularly, *v. 36, 37, 38.* he believes. When Christ comes to talk with a great Sinner, one that hath had Diseases naturally incurable, he exerts a stronger Faith than others. 'Tis then, *Lord, I believe*, and 'tis a Faith accompani'd with an Adoration.

2. *In following Occasions.*

2.

Pardoning such great Sins, and converting such great Sinners, is the best Credential Letter Christ brings with him from Heaven; Men naturally would scarce believe him for his own sake, but for his Works sake they would; because they are more led by Sense than Faith. This Christ knew, when he bids his Disciples believe him for the Works sake; that he was sent by God, and that they are unanimous in this Work of Grace, as well as in other Works, *Joh. 14. 11. Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very works sake.* Therefore those that have been Partakers of this Converting Grace, if they stagger, and doubt afterwards, they give the greatest affront to Christ.

For their unbelief is not only against his Person, but against his Work too. That he has far more reason to stay to such, than he did to his Disciples, *Mat. 17. 17. How long shall I be with you? &c.* what should I stay to do such great Works as these, and cannot be believed?

Such



Such great Sins pardon'd, and escap'd, make men take faster hold of Christ afterward. As a man that hath lately got out of a deep Lake, wherein there were many Serpents, Crocodiles, and Venomous Creatures, which he has escap'd, and has no Sanctuary to protect him from their fury, but by hanging upon a small Bough; when he looks down upon them, and sees them gaping for him, and ready to devour him, if he were within their reach, he will summon up all his strength to hold fast that Branch. In such a day will the *Branch of the Lord* also be beautiful and glorious.

Certainly, when the Soul went out to Christ in so desperate a Condition, with the load of guilt and discouragement upon it, and resolv'd to venture upon him, come what would of it, and found success; As it was the boldest adventure, which the Scripture frequently calls boldness, so 'tis the greatest encouragement to come to Christ upon any occasion whatsoever hereafter. This first act of Faith is of so noble and generous a quality, that 'tis set as the Copy  
of

of all following Acts of Faith, 3. *Heb.*  
 14. *Beginning of your confidence; & piled;*  
 the primary Act of Faith, which was  
 the principal Act of Confidence.

Though there is a greater strength in  
 the habit of Faith after Conversion, yet  
 the first exercise of it upon Christ is the  
 boldest and most vigorous, because it  
 was for the saving the life, when the  
 Soul saw no recovery any way but in  
 Christ; and the most noble, when it  
 was under the discouragements of such  
 mountains of Guilt.

It also gave Christ the greatest Ho-  
 nour; for it was an act of greater Con-  
 fidence in him than any succeeding act  
 could be. Now if thou didst put forth  
 such a high and daring Act of Faith,  
 when all thy sins hung about thee, and  
 thou hadst neither a *Hur* or *Aaron* to  
 hold up thy hands, with much more  
 confidence mayest thou come now, since  
 thou hast tried how successful thy first  
 Faith hath been. So when Temptati-  
 ons assault thee, and the Devil with all  
 his black Legions besets thee round,  
 thou art not in a worse condition than at  
 the first, when all thy sins did not only  
 H be-

besiege thee, but possess thee; well may such a Soul say, If I acted Faith when the Devil had all the Strong-holds in me, at the worst; now 'tis but to start out, and exercise the power of that first Faith.

3. *In case of Corruptions likewise, and unmaster'd sins*: I have great Corruptions, but the Power which raised Christ, raised me, when I had greater Stones upon me, wherewith I had even wearied God himself; and now when I have fewer, though they are too great still, shall I despair of that Power which wrought greater Miracles for me, and threw away my Grave-Stones, when I was not able to stir my self?

4. *So in case of Desertion*. I'll venture to go to God, let him frown and strike; for I am sure I did once go to him when I was his absolute sworn Enemy, and he had not a greater Hater of him in the world than I was, and he did receive me: I am not worse now than I was at that time; for I love him, and would do all that I can to please him; therefore I will press into his Presence now, and try the success of my first Faith. Such

Such mens Faith is usually a more generous Faith, because they have less of the Principle of Reason to support it. 'Tis like that of *Abraham's*, a believing *in hope against hope*, 4. Rom. 18. A Faith against mighty and mountainous opposition of high and mighty sins, that might scare a man from such acts of Faith, and establish a diffidence of the Promises of God in the Soul: God receives no more Glory from the Faith of any, than from those of the greatest Sinners through their Repentance.

7thly. *Fear and Reverence:*

Such will never despise the Riches of that Goodness and Patience which has been given out to him, 2. Rom. 4. because it has led him to repentance; and he will not provoke that Goodness which is conducting him to the enjoyment of all the fruits of Repentance, to throw him off.

*There is forgiveness with thee, faith David; 130. Psal. 4. that thou mayest be feared, or worshipped. If God should set a mark of Death upon every Iniquity, who could stand in his presence, or*



have any hope to be heard ; but because he is a God of forgiveness, therefore he is revered ; therefore the more Forgiveness he doth expend upon any, the more he is reverenc'd. After a man's return to God, his fear of God is increased upon a more ingenuous account ; for he fears God and *his goodness*, 3. *Hos.* 5. whereas before he feared God and his Power, God and his Justice. And the *Jews* of whom he there speaks, shall fear, or reverence that Goodness the more ; because the sin he has pardoned was so great, as the crucifying the Son of God, which according to their Fathers Wish lay upon the heads of all their Posterity.

God's Goodness once tasted, will make Ingenuity afraid to offend him. Self interest also will make them afraid to provoke that Mercy that formerly relieved them, to cashier them out of his Favour.

When the man was in the deep Dungeon, where the Fetters of Sin entred into his very Soul, and bound up under the Terrors of the Law, when Mercy stepped in, and delivered him,  
and

and poured Oyl into his Wounds, He will be afraid to provoke that Mercy to leave him in the ſame condition in which it found him, and from whence it drew him. He will be loath to be numbred amongſt the Crew of Transgreſſors, and Bank of Gally-slaves, from whence he has been redeemed. He that hath taſted the bitterneſs of Sin, will fear to commit it; and he that hath felt the ſweetneſs of Mercy, will fear to offend it.

I might add, *For others ſakes, to engage them to come to Chriſt.*

Every Conversion of a great Sinner is a new Copy of God's Love; 'tis a repeated Proclamation of the tranſcendency of his Grace. *Eph. 2. 5, 6. Even when we were dead in ſins, hath quickened us together with Chriſt.* God hath quicken'd thoſe Rank Sinners, that were as black as darkneſs it ſelf, and had rais'd them to a condition of light; why? *v. 7.* Not only for themſelves, But that *in the Ages to come he might ſhew forth, κορυφαία, transcendent riches of his grace.* 'Twas a Picture God

drew of his own Heart, and expos'd to the view of the World, that they might know by the gracious Entertainment, and high advancement of those Sinners, how liberal he is, and would always be in the distributions of his Grace, that Penitent Sinners of as great Stains might be encourag'd in all Ages to rely upon him. This was his Design in Paul's Conversion in this Chapter, v. 16. *Howbeit, for this cause I obtain'd mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.* A Pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him. He sets up this Apostle as a White Flag to invite Rebels to treat with him, and return to their Loyalty. As every great Judgment upon a grand Sinner is as the hanging a Man in Chains, to deter others from the like practice; so every Conversion is not only an act of God's Mercy to the Convert, but an Invitation to the Spectators.

This is the Argument David useth to persuade God to pour into him the joy of his salvation, *Psal. 51. 12, 13.*

*The*

Then will I teach transgressors thy ways,  
 &c. I'll make all *Jerusalem* ring of it;  
 and Sinners seeing the multitude and  
 long Train of thy tender Mercies, shall  
 fly into thy Arms to be partakers of the  
 same Grace. For every great Conver-  
 sion is as a Sea-mark, to guide others  
 into a safe harbour. And indeed this  
 he tells God, when he had receiv'd  
 Pardon, that this would be the issue of  
 God's Pardon to *David*, *Psal.* 32. 5, 6.  
 which is thought to be penn'd upon the  
 same occasion, as *Psal.* 51. when v. 5.  
 he had been forgiven, he tells God what  
 the effect upon others would be, v. 6.  
*For this shall every one that is godly, &c.*  
 Judging it the fittest time to come when  
 God is dealing out his Mercy. Such  
 effects we find when Christ was upon  
 the Earth; when Christ call'd *Matthem*,  
*Mark* 2. 14. the next news we hear,  
 v. 15. is, that many Publicans and Sin-  
 ners sat down with him, and follow'd  
 him. Many of the same Tribe were en-  
 courag'd by this kindness to one of their  
 Fellows, to attend upon him.

As when a Physician comes into an  
 House where many are sick, and cures



one that is desperate, 'tis an encouragement to the rest to rely upon his Skill.

When Christ gives an Experiment of his Art on any Sinner near thee, 'tis a Call from Heaven as well to excite thy Emulation to come to him, as thy Astonishment at it. As the Conversion of the *Gentiles* was to provoke the *Jews* to Jealousy; 11. *Rom. 11. Salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke, &c.* Indeed such Conversions may more rationally move men, than any Miracle can objectively move the Sense. To see such a remarkable Change wrought in the Soul of a Devil, in a Diabolical Nature. If men believe not in Christ after the sight of such standing Miracles, 'tis an aggravation of their Impenitency, as much as any Miracle Christ wrought upon the Earth, was of the *Jews* Obstinacy, and does put a black dye upon it. 21. *Matt. 32. Ye when you had seen it, repented not afterward, that you might believe him.* Not any great Sinner that thou hast seen take Heaven by violence, but is writ down by God as a *Test* upon all thy unbelief. And how many

many hundred *Yets* may Christ bring against thee, upon the account of others converted round about thee. The *Yet* set upon *Paul* may refer to this, 9 *Acts* 1. because in the foregoing Chapter *Luke* had related the successful progress of the Gospel in *Samaria* and *Jerusalem*, which was an evidence of the Power of this new Doctrine: *Yet Paul* proceeded in his persecuting Fury, against such clear Testimonies.

Had you been in the times of Christ, and seen those Miracles he wrought among the *Jews*, you would all think you should never have been so stupid as they were, but would presently have believ'd in him upon a sight of those Wonders. Let me tell you, the Success of Christ's Grace upon the Souls of men, whereof you have seen many Evidences, is a greater Miracle, by Christ's own confession, than usually he wrought: For he tells the Apostles, they should work *greater works*, 14. *Joh.* 12. which he means of their Success in converting work. And so thy Impenitency has as great aggravations as the *Jewish* Perversity. Let every such  
Con-

Conversion of a great Sinner be a ground of hope to thee, and a spur in thy side.

Further, such Conversions evidence that God's Commands are practicable, that his Yoke is not burthenfome. Men naturally think God a hard Master, that his Commands are impossible to be performed; but when they see men that had lain soaking in Sin many years, to have a fresh and fair Verdure by Grace, to run with delight in the ways of God's Commands: When they see men that had the greatest prejudices against the ways of God, thoroughly turn'd, they may think with themselves, Why may not I observe those Commands? Is it more impossible for me, than such a one? 'Tis natural to men not to believe, unless they see Miracles; 4. *John* 48. *Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.* Therefore all the standing Miracles God hath left in the world, are the extraordinary Conversions of men, and the worst of men, that men may thereby be convinced of the Power of the Gospel, and the Strength of his Grace, by seeing the admirable effects  
of

of it upon others; for many times Conversion begins in admiration.

V S E.

I. *Instruction.*

This Doctrine manifests the Power of the Gospel.

Nothing shows more the heavenly Authority of the Christian Religion, and the Divine Efficacy of the Word, than the sudden Conversions of notorious Sinners. That a man should enter into the Church a Tyger, and return a Lamb.

'Tis this little Stone which is instrumental to lay Lusts more Giant-like than *Goliath*; groveling in the dust.

That *Paul*, mad with Rage against the Christians, should after an Arrest in his Journey embrace a Religion he had hated. A *Pharisee* changed into a Preacher. A Persecutor commence a Martyr. That one of eminent Parts, in favour with the *Sanhedrim*, should fly from a Preferment expected, and patronize a Doctrine contemned in the world, and attended with Poverty, Misery, cruel Scourgings, and Death.

When-



Whenever you see such Effects, take them as new Credentials from Heaven, to maintain the Credit of the Word, and to assert the Authority of that Conclusion *Paul* lays down, *Rom. i. 16.* That it is *the power of God unto salvation.* God gains a reputation to the Gospel, and the power of Christianity, that can in a moment change Persons from Beasts to Men, from Serpents to Saints.

2. 2ly. *Groundlessness of Despair.*

Despair not of others, when thou dost reflect upon thy own Crimes, and confidest, that God never dealt with a baser Heart in the World than thine was. Was not *Paul* as unlike to prove a Convert, as any Relation of thine that wallows in his blood? Who would have thought that *Onesimus* should run from his Master, and be caught in Christ's Arms?

Neither despair of thy self. Shall any Soul in anguish, and cover'd with penitential Blushes, think it self cast out of the Riches of God's affectionate Grace? Shall any Man so much blaspheme

pheme the merciful Bowels of Jesus Christ, as to fly to a Knife, a Halter, or a deep Well for succour? Though thou wert in Hell, *David* tells thee God is with thee, even there in his Essential presence; yea, though thou wert Hell it self; for where the Devil dwells, that's Hell: Yet if the Soul throbs, sighs, groans under it, his infinite Grace will break down the door, and come in upon thee. And we know, that neither she that had seven Devils, nor he that had a Legion, were strong enough to keep out Christ.

2ly. *Comfort.*

2.

If God has made thee of a great Sinner the Object of his Mercy, thou may'st be assur'd of,

1. *Continuance of his Love.* He pardon'd thee when thou wert an Enemy, will he leave thee now thou art his Friend? He lov'd thee when thou hadst raz'd out in a great measure his Image and Picture, which he had set in thy Soul; will he hate thee now, since he has restor'd that Image, and drawn it with fresh Colours? He justified thee  
when

when thou wert ungodly, and will he cast thee off, since he hath been at such pains about thee, and written in thee a Counterpart of his own divine Nature in the Work of Grace?

Were his Bowels first mov'd when thou hadst no Grace? and will they not found louder since thou hast Grace?

Would the Father embrace his Son, when his Garments smelt of Drass and Swine? and will he cast him off, after he hath put upon him a Royal Robe?

Will *Pharaoh's* Daughter pity *Moses*, when he was in a filthy pitchy Ark? and will the Charitable Lady scorn him when he is dress'd?

2. 2ly. *Supplies of his Grace.*

Thou hadst a rich Present of his Grace sent thee, when thou couldst not pray for it; and will he not much more give thee whatsoever is needful, when thou callest upon him? He was found of thee, when thou didst not seek him; and will he hide himself from thee when thou art enquiring after him? A wise Builder does not begin a Work, when he is not able to finish it. God  
confr-

consider'd, before he began with thee, what Charge thou would'st stand him in, both of Merit in Christ, and Grace in thee; so that the Grace he hath given thee, is not only a Mercy to thee, but an Obligation on himself, since his Credit is engaged to compleat it. Thou hast more unanswerable Arguments to plead before him, than thou hadst, *viz.* His Son, his Truth, his Promise, his Grace, his Name, wherein before thou hadst not the least interest.

To what purpose hath God call'd thee, and wash'd thee, if he did not intend to supply thee with as much Grace as shall bring thee to Glory? To what purpose should a Creditor forgive part of a Debt, and lay the Debtor in Prison for the other part? Has God given thee Christ? and will he detain any thing else? Supplies of Wants, Grants of any thing thou desirest, are but as a few grains of Pepper that the Grocer puts in as an Overplus to many pounds.

3ly. *Strength against Corruptions.*

Can Molehills stand against him who has levell'd Mountains? Can a few Clouds



Clouds withstand the melting Force of the Sun, which has dissolv'd those black Mists that overspread the Face of the Heavens? No more can the remainders of thy Corruption bear head against his Power, which has thrown down the great Hills of the Sins of thy Natural Condition, and has dissolv'd the thick Fogs of thy unregeneracy.

Thou canst neither doubt his Strength nor his Love; *Amor gaudet in maximus*; He has done the greatest, and will he withdraw his Hand from doing the least? When *Moses* slew the *Egyptian*, 'tis said, *Acts* 7. 25. That he supposed his brethren would have understood, that God intended by his hand to deliver them. *Moses* was a Type of Christ: Has Christ overthrown a whole Army of *Egyptians*, that did not only pursue thee, but kept thee in slavery? Has he overturn'd them all in the Red Sea? and wilt thou not take notice thereby, that he intends to be thy Deliverer from the scatter'd Troops of them?

3.

3ly. Exhortation.

1. To those that God hath dealt so with.

1. Glorify

1. *Glorify God for his Grace.*

Admiration is all the Glory you can give to God for his Grace, seeing you can add nothing to his Essential Glory. Christ will come at the last day to be admir'd; I pray send your Admirations before-hand to attend him at his Coming.

Who made thee thus to differ from another? Was it not God? Let him then have the Glory. If he made thee to differ from others in the Enjoyment of his Mercy, do thou also differ from others in the Sounding of his Praise. If thou hast an Angel's State, 'tis fit thou should'st have an Angel's Note. If *David*, when he consider'd the glorious Heavens God had made for Man, cried out so affectionately, *Psal. 8. 4. What is man that thou art mindful of him!* Surely, when thou considerest that Work of Grace which God hath wrought in thee, thou may'st with Astonishment cry out, *What is man that thou art mindful of him!* What is such a Toad, that thou shouldest take him into thy bosom? For there is not a Grace in thee, but is more glorious than the

K

Sun

Sun with all its Regiments of Stars ; and is more like to God than the great Fountain of Light with all its amazing splendor. 'Tis something of that Heaven, which is more glorious than all the rest of the Heavens, and is above the reach of the natural Eye. Oh what is Man that thou art thus mindful of him, to make him who is a Hell by Sin, to become Heaven by Grace ! Pardon of but one act of Sin, makes us for ever debtors to God ; because one Sin renders us obnoxious to Eternal Torments, and every Sin includes a hatred of God. What then is it to remit such vast Sums, if to pardon one be a Miracle ! To pardon many committed against a suffering Christ, that hath invited us, and repeats his invitations, after they have been rejected, is a Miracle of the greatest magnitude, something above a Miracle !

How should you think *Jacob's* Expression in Temporal Mercies, a few Sheep, too mean ! *Gen. 32. 10. I am less than the least of all thy mercies.* Oh I am less, less, less than the least of all this Mercy. A great Sinner, when converted, should sing a Note somewhat above

above *David's*, *Pſal.* 116. 12. *What ſhall I render ?* and would ſay, I can render nothing, nothing ; but I will render Praise, Bleſſing, Amazement, Aſtoniſhment ; That is all I can render, and I cannot render enough of that.

Had you choſen God firſt, it had been ſome ingenuity in God to answer that affection ; but God choſe you firſt, and that when there was nothing lovely in you, when he ſaw you the moſt deform'd Creatures in the World. There was no Likeneſs between God and thee. *Similis ſimile amat*, is a Rule in Nature ; but in this Caſe, *Deus optimus diligit hominem peſſimum*.

'Tis that which does amaze the Diſciples ; they could not tell the reaſon why Chriſt ſhould manifeſt himſelf to them, *John* 14. 22. Perhaps thou art only ſnatcht out of a Family ; the Wrath of God may be fallen upon the reſt, and thou only eſcap'd. Has he not lopt down many Cedars in Morality, and choſen thee, a Thorn, a Shrub, to deck Heaven with ? Are not many damn'd, that were not guilty of thy Sins ?

I 2

How



How wonderful is it that such a black Firebrand should be made a Statue fit for Glory? He might have writ thy Name as easily in his Black Book, as in his White. Is it not admirable Mercy for a God provok'd, to take pains with stiff-neck'd Sinners, and to beat down Mountains of high Imaginations, to rear up a Temple to himself? If Mercy had knockt once or twice, and no more, thou hadst dropt into Hell; but Mercy would not leave knocking. Perhaps thy Sins were so great, that if thou hadst gone but a little farther, thou hadst been irrecoverable; but God put a stop to the proud Waves, saying, *Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further.*

2. 2ly. *Often call to mind thy former Sin.*

It hath been the custom of the Saints of God formerly. When *Matthew* reckons up the Twelve Apostles, *Mat. 10. 3.* whereof he was one, he remembers his former State, *Matthew the Publican*; but none of the other Evangelists call him so in that Enumeration.

1. *It makes us more humble.* Thoughts of Pride cannot lodge in us, when the remembrance of our Rags, Bolts, and Fetters, is frequently renew'd. What was there in thy former life, but Misery, to move God to shew Mercy to thee? Though *Paul* had a greater Manifestation than any we read of, nay than Christ himself had, (for we do not read that Christ was wrapt up into the Third Heavens) yet how frequently does he remember his Sin of Persecuting, to keep Humiliation in exercise, and stop the growth of Pride.

2ly. *It will make us thankful.* Sense of Misery heightens our Obligation to Mercy. Men at Sea are most thankful for Deliverance, when they consider the Danger of the foregoing Storm. A long Night makes a clear Morning more welcome.

3ly. *It will make thee more active in the Exercise of that Grace which is contrary to thy former Sin.* Christ ask'd Peter thrice whether he lov'd him, *John* 21. to put him tacitly in mind of his

late Sin, and to have a threefold Exercise of his Love, proportionable to his threefold Denial.

4. 4ly. *It will be a Preservative against falling into the same Sin again.* Perhaps Christ might press that threefold Demand of *Peter's* Love, to renew his Repentance for his Apostacy, as the best Antidote against the falling into the same Sin; and therefore *Peter* was griev'd when he ask'd him the third time; not so much, it may be, for the suspicion his Master had of his Fidelity, as for the just Cause of Jealousy his fall had given him. And at this third Question calling to mind his Denial, he renew'd his Grief for his late unworthy Carriage. Look back then upon thy former Sin, but let it be with Anger and Shame, to strengthen thy Detestation, to strangle thy former delight in it, and to magnify the Mercy of God, who has deliver'd thee from it.

When the *Corinthians* were proud of their spiritual Gifts, the Apostle beats down their swelling Plumes, by giving them a review of their accursed State,

1 Cor.

1 Cor. 12. 2. *Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb Idols. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, &c.* When a Convert frequently considers what he was once in his unregenerate State, he would not for all the Honours, Profits and Pleasures of the World, return to that State again; so great a delight he takes in the Work of the New Creature.

Second Branch of Exhortation is to *those that are in a doubting Condition.*

*Obj.* The main Objection such make, is the Greatness of Sin. Oh! there was never such a great Sinner in the World as I am! If you rake all Hell over, you will not find such another. Sure God will never pardon me; My Sins are too great to be forgiven. Such language as this does sometimes drop from Men, which they are partly urg'd to by the Devil, to disparage that Royal Prince *Jesús*, that came to destroy his Works, and to keep up an Enmity between God and Man, in making the Creature have jealous Thoughts of the Creator. And partly from a Man's



own Conscience, which acting by those legal Principles writ in the Heart by Nature, which are directive, and upon non-observance condemning, but discover nothing of pardoning Grace. This was the first Act of Natural Conscience in *Adam*, after he had sinn'd, he had the least thoughts of forgiveness, for he studied nothing, but how he might fly from the Presence of God. Such Speeches as these discredit thy Creator, if they be persisted in, argues thee to be one of *Cain's* Posterity, who indeed told God to his very face, *Gen. 4. 13.* that his Sin was greater than could be forgiven. I will a little argue with such.

*Ans. 1.* Art thou indeed the greatest Sinner? *I can hardly believe it.* Didst thou ever sin after the rate that *Paul* did? or wert thou ever possess'd with such a fury? Sure there have been some as great Sinners as thou art, be as bad as bad can be. If thou wert to look over the Names of all those now in Heaven, and ask them all what Sins they were guilty of, before God shew'd Mercy to them; I cannot think but thou

thou shouldest find many that would Mate thee, yea, and exceed thee too ; and thou canst not charge thy self with any black Circumstances, but thou wouldest meet with some or other that would cry out presently, Oh, I was in the like condition, and rather worse ! What dost thou think of Christ's Murderers, who resisted the Eloquence of his Sermons, and the Power of his Miracles ? And when his Death had darkened the Sun, shook the Earth, clave the Rocks, rent the Vail of the Temple in twain ; not one Heart among that murderous Crew had any saving Relentings that we read of. And yet were not some of these converted by *Peter's* Sermon, and the Pardon of them left upon Record by the Spirit of God ?

Have not some of God's greatest Favourites been the greatest Sinners ? Did not *Adam* draw upon him the guilt of all his Posterity, and may in some sense be charg'd with the Sins of all those that came out of his Loins, even all Mankind ? Yet to this very Person was the first Promise of the Gospel made, and that before he pronounced any Sen-

Sentence against him for his Sin, Gen.  
3. 15.

2. 2ly. Suppose thou art the greatest, *is thy staying from Christ the way to make all thy Sins less?* Art thou so rich, as to pay this great debt out of thy own Revenue? Or hast thou any hopes of another Surety? Did any Man or Angel tell thee, they could satisfy for thee? Can Complaints of a great Load, without endeavouring its removal, ease that Back that bears it?
3. 3ly. Are thy Sins the greatest? *Is not the staying from Christ a making them greater?* Does not God command thee to come to Christ? and is not thy delay a greater Act of Disobedience, than the Complaint of thy sinfulness can be of Humility? Hast thou not Load enough already, but wilt thou add Unbelief, which is as black as all thy other Sins put together? Is not a refusal of his Mercy provocative? Thou art mad if thou thinkest thy Sin can decrease by trampling upon Christ's Heart, and spurning at his Bowels. Thou hast  
sinn'd

ſinn'd againſt Juſtice, againſt Wiſdom, againſt common Providence: Is not this enough, but wilt thou rob him of an Opportunity to ſhow the Riches of his Grace, by reſuſing the Blood of his Son, which his Wiſdom contrived, and his Love offers?

Who is it perſuades thee thus to keep off from Chriſt? Does God? Show me, where is his hand for it? Show me thy Authority in God's Warrant. But ſince thou canſt not, I am ſure 'tis thy own corrupt heart and the Devil in League together. And mayſt thou not ſay of him far better than *Ahab* did of *Micaiah*, Thou didſt *never prophecy good* to me; no, he never did, nor ever will. What, wilt thou more black thy ſelf, by following the Devil's Counſel, than obeying God's Command? If thy ſin be great, let it multiply thy Tears, but by no means ſtop thy progreſs to Chriſt.

4thly. *Were thy ſins leſs than they are, thou mighteſt not ſo eaſily believe in Chriſt, as now thou mayeſt.*

4.

If thou wilt not believe while thy ſins are great, and thy heart naughty,  
I dare



I dare assure thee, if thy heart were not naught, and thy sins little, thou wouldst not believe ; for thou wouldest be apt to believe in thy own heart, and trust in thy own Righteousness, rather than believe in Christ. Great Sins and a bad Heart felt and bewail'd, is rather an advantage ; as Hunger is an incentive to a man to seek for Meat. If men had clean hearts, 'tis like they would dispose of them otherwise, and rather think Christ should come to them. Mens Poverty should rather make them more importunate, than more modest. To say, I will not come to Christ, because I have great sins, is as if one should say, I will never have any thing to do with Happiness if offer'd, because I have great Misery : I'll go to no Chirurgeon, because my Wound is so great : I'll eat no Bread, because I am so exceeding hungry, and like to starve. This is ill Logick ; and so 'tis with thee, to argue, Because I am filthy, therefore I will not go to the Fountain to be washed ; or to think to be sanctified before believing. Now since thou hast, as thou confessest, no Righteousness to trust in, methinks thou

thou shouldest be the more easily persuaded to cast thy self upon Christ, since there is no other way but that.

If therefore thou art afraid of drowning under these mighty Floods which rowl upon thee, methinks thou shouldst do as men ready to perish in the Waters, catch hold of that which is next them, though it be the dearest Friend they have ; and there is none nearer to thee than Christ, nor any such a Friend ; catch hold therefore of him.

5thly. *The Greatness of thy Sin is a ground for a Plea.*

5.

Turn thy Sins into Arguments, as David doth, 25. *Psal.* 11.—*For it is great.* Some translate it, *Though it be great ;* and the *Hebrew* word <sup>גדול</sup> will bear both. The *Psalmist* useth two Arguments, God's Name, and the Greatness of his Sin. And both are as good Arguments as they were then.

Thou mayest go to God with this language in thy mouth ; Lord, my filthiness is great, there is more need therefore of thy washing me ; my Wound is deep, the greater is the necessity of  
some

some Plaister for the Cure. What charitable man in the world would not hasten a Medicine, rather than refuse to grant it? What earthly Physician would object, The Disease is great, therefore there is no necessity of a Cure; therefore there is no room left for my Skill? And shall God be less charitable than man?

Dogs are filthy and foul, yet they may lay claim to Crumbs.

Thou mayest use also the Argument of God's Name. Sinners may plead for Grace upon the account of God's Glory; *viz.* The Glory God will have by it. His Wisdom is eminent in serving his own Ends by his greatest Enemy. His Power in conquering Sin, his Grace in pardoning. Show him his own Name, 34. *Exod.* and see if he will deny any Letter of it.

If thy Disease were not so great, Christ's Glory would not be so illustrious. Pardon of such Sins enhanceth the Mercy and Skill of thy Saviour. The multitude of Devils which were in *Mary Magdalen*, are recorded to show the Power of that Saviour that expell'd them,

them, and wrought so remarkable a Change. Are thy sins the greatest? God that loves to advance his free Grace in the highest manner, will be glad of the opportunity to have so great a Sinner follow the Chariot of it, and to manifest thereby its uncontrollable Power.

Use *David's Argument* 39. *Psal.* 12. When *ver.* 8. he pray'd, that God would deliver him from his *transgressions*, v. 12. he useth this argument, That he was a *stranger*. I know no reason but it may be thine, for if thy sins be great, thou art more alienated from God than the ordinary rank of men: Lord, thou dost command us to show kindness to strangers, to love our Enemies; and wilt thou not use the same Mercy to a stranger, that thou commandest others to use, and show the same Love to so great an Enemy as I am? The greater my Enmity, the more glorious will be thy Love.

Plead therefore,

1st. *Infiniteness of God's Mercy.*

'Tis strange if thy Debts should be so great, that the Exchequer of the King  
of

I.



of kings cannot discharge. Why should the Apostle say, God was *rich in mercy*, Eph. 4. and call it *Great Love*, if it were spent only upon little sins, and if any Debts could exhaust it: For surely an Infinite God cannot be finitely rich. If God be rich in mercy, he is surely infinitely rich: Thou canst not think that any that have got to Heaven before thee, have drein'd his Treasures, for then it had been finite, not infinite. They were not unsearchable Riches, if the sins of all the world could find the bottom of them.

God looks upon his Grace as the greatest part of his Estate. He calls it his Riches, which Title he gives not any other Attribute: Now Riches are not to lye by and rust, but to be laid out and traded with; and the more they are traded with, the more Wealth they bring in. God hath not delight to keep these Riches by him, and to hoard them up for no use; for *omne bonum est sui diffusivum*; therefore the more Goodness any thing hath, the more diffusive it is of it self. God loves to distribute his Wealth upon his own terms, and to venture

venture out Riches of Grace, that he may have returns of Riches of Glory; so that if you come to God, you have all his Estate at your service. Till thou canst be as sinful as God is merciful, as evil as God is good, do not think thy Iniquities can check an Almighty Goodness. Mercy bears the greatest sway in God's Name, 34. *Exod.* 6, 7. There is but one Letter of his Power, two of his Justice, and nine or ten expressions of his Mercy. His Power attends his Mercy as well as his Justice; so that on Mercy's side against Justice there is five to one, which is great odds.

Plead then with God, Lord, 'tis said in thy Word, 3. *Prov.* 28. *Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give thee, when 'tis in the power of thine hand to do it.* Should not a man refuse to give to his Neighbour, when he has it by him; and shall the merciful God deny me that Mercy which I beg of him upon my knees, when he has it all in store by him? Must I forgive my Brother, if he offends 77 times, a double perfect Number; and must I be more charitable to man, than

Infinite Mercy will be to me? Shall thy Justice only speak, and thy Mercy be silent, and plead nothing on my behalf? Hast thou not said, that thou art he that *blots out transgressions for thy own sake*, 43. *Isa. 25.*? That thou dost *blot out iniquities like a thick cloud*, 44. *Isa. 22.*? Is there any Cloud so thick as to master the melting power of the Sun; and shall ever a cloud of sin be so thick as to master the power of thy Mercy? Has not thy Mercy as much Strength and Eloquence to plead for me, as thy Justice has to declaim against me? Is thy Justice better arm'd with Reason, than thy Kindness with Compassions? Have thy Bowels no Eloquence? Oh! who can resist the pleasing Rhetorick of his own Bowels?

- e. 2dly. *Christ's, and God's intent in his coming, was to discharge great sins.* He was called Jesus, a Saviour, because he was to save his people from their sins. And do you think some of his peoples sins were not as great as any mens sins in the world? To save only from little iniquities, had not been a work suitable to the glorious Name of Jesus. Neither can we conceive how Christ should enter

enter into such strict Bonds to his Father, to be a Surety only for some smaller Debts? If this had not been his intent, he would have put some Limitation in that Prayer he taught his Disciples, and not have commanded them to pray, *Forgive us our Trespases*; but, *Forgive us our little Sins*, or Sins of such a size. He never ask'd what sins, and how many sins men were guilty of, when they came to him. But upon Faith, saith he, *Thy sins are forgiven thee*. Plead therefore with Christ, and say, Thou didst come to do thy Father's Will, which was, that none should be cast off that come unto thee; and thou hast said the same; 'tis not sufficient for thee to say it merely, and not to do it. Wilt thou draw me *with the Cords of a man*, (for I could not thus come to thee, unless thou didst draw me) and shall I be beaten back with a Frown?

3dly. *Christ's Death was a Satisfaction for the greatest sins*, both *ex parte facientis*, Christ, and *ex parte acceptantis*, God; for God could not accept any Satisfaction but what was infinite, 10. Heb. 12. *One sacrifice for sins for ever*, &c. Not



\* Goulart  
Tableau  
de la mort,  
Tableau 9.  
p. 131.

one sin, but sins. Not little sins, but sins without exception. Yea, and 'tis all sin, 1 *Joh* 1. 7. And *all* includes great as well as little. \* Satan once came to a sick man, and shows him a great Catalogue of his sins, concluding from thence his Eternal Damnation: The sick man strengthening himself by the Word of God, bid the Devil write over the Catalogue in great Letters those words, 1 *John* 1. 7. whereupon the Devil presently leaves him.

Can thy Sins be greater than Christ's Merit? Or thine Offences, than his Sacrifice? 'Tis strange if the Malignity of thy Sin should be as infinite as the Virtue of his Death.

He hath satisfied for all the Saints that ever came to Heaven; and put thy sins in the balance with theirs, and surely they cannot weigh so much. He was a propitiation for the sins of the whole world; and are thy sins as great as the sins of the whole World? If part of his Merits be enough to save Ten thousand damn'd Souls in Hell, if they had applied it; is it not enough to satisfy God for thy Sins, which are far less?

Was

Was not Christ charg'd with as great Sins as thine can be, when he was upon the Cross? Or are thy single Sins bigger than all those the Prophet means, when he saith, *Isa. 53. 6. And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

Well then, plead thy Saviour's death, since it was for his honour to satisfy for sins of so deep a dye: 'Tis said in thy Word, 'Tis a Joy to a Righteous Man to perform Judgment; and shall it not be much more a Joy to the Righteous God? Behold, here I offer thee the Atonement thy Son and my Saviour has made; and if it be not enough, I am content to perish: But if it be, I desire thee to do me Justice with that joy that a Righteous Man would do it with, and discharge my Transgressions. And if thou dost object, that I have flung away this Satisfaction, and would not have it: I answer, My Saviour's satisfaction was for such sins as those, otherwise none would be sav'd: for was there any but refused the Proffer of it at first, and made Demurs before they entertain'd it? Let thy Objections be what they will, Christ shall be my Attorney to answer for me.

4. 4thly, *Christ is able to take away great sins.*

Did he ever let any one that came to him with a great infirmity, go back without a Cure, and dishonour himself so much, as that it should be said, It was a Distemper too great for the Power of Jesus to remedy? And why should there be any Sin that he cannot pardon? 'Tis as easy for him to heal the one as the other: For he did with as much ease and delight say, *Thy sins are forgiven thee*; as lay, *Take up thy bed, and walk.*

Hast thou Seven Devils? Suppose a Legion, *i.e.* 6666; he did dispossess a Body of as many: Can he not as easily dispossess a Soul? If thou hadst Ten thousand Legions, I dare say Christ would not lose an opportunity of such a Conquest: For it would please him more to do great works than little, and to show how far his Power can reach.

Were it not for such Objects, we could not know whether he could *save to the utmost*, or no, *7. Heb. 25.* What has he this Ability for? to lye idle? No surely,

surely, to be exercis'd about the most difficult Tasks. Suppose the Scrool of thy Sins were as long as to reach from Earth to the highest Heavens; would this reach to the utmost of Christ's Ability? If thou hadst sinn'd as far as any man in the world can sin, yet still thou art not got without the Verge of Christ's Saving-Power. That word *utmost* I dare set against all thy Objections. If you had the Sins of all the damn'd in Hell upon you, you could not put either his Free Grace or vast Power to a Nonplus. His Blood is of that Virtue, that were it pour'd out upon a Devil, it would make him presently commence a glorious Angel.

What is either a great or a light Disease to Omnipotency, when with the same Word he can cure the greatest as well as the least Distempers?

But may the Soul say, I do not question his Power, *but his Will*. Therefore,

5thly. *Christ's Nature leads him to show Mercy to the greatest Sinners.*

5.



Some question whether Christ will pardon them, for they look upon him as a hard Master, that will not easily forgive. But Christ gives another Character of himself, 11. *Mat.* 28, 29. when he exhorts men to come to him; he tells them they must not judge him to be of a rugged and implacable nature, but as *meek* as they are sinful. Meekness is seen in pardoning of Injuries, not keeping them in memory, to beget and cherish Revenge. Now the greater the Provocation, the more transcendent is that Meekness to pass it by.

Did he ever upbraid any with their Offences, and hit them in the teeth with their former Extravagancies? 7. *Luk.* 44. Christ makes a Narrative of *Mary's* acts of kindness to him, but not a syllable of her foul Transgressions. Are thy sins so great? surely Christ who delights in his Compassions, will not lose such an opportunity of evidencing both his Power, and his Pity upon such a Subject; For if there cannot be so great a Sinner as thou art, he is never like to have such a season for it, if he miss of thee.

6thly.

6thly. *Chriſt was exalted by God upon this very account.* Heb. 7. 25. Wherefore he is able to ſave them to the uttermoſt that come unto God by him. How comes Chriſt to be ſo able to ſave to the utmoſt? 'Tis becauſe he ever lives to make interceſſion for them: For whom? for thoſe that come to God by him. What has Chriſt his life in Heaven for, but to intercede? And would his Father's love to him, and the greatneſs of his intereſt in God be diſcover'd, by granting ſome ſmall Requeſts, the pardon of a few and little Sins? Chriſt is conſecrated Prieſt by the Oath of God, Heb. 7. 28. would God put himſelf to his Oath for a light buſineſs, a thing of little moment? What is the end of this Oath? Compare it with Heb. 6. 16, 17, 18. *For men verily ſwear by the greater; and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all ſtriſe. Wherein God willing more abundantly to ſhew unto the heirs of promiſe the immutability of his counſel, confirm'd it by an oath: And all is that you might have ſtrong conſolation. What ſtrong Comfort could there be, if only little*

little Debts were remitted? What is the end of an Oath? *v. 16.* to take away *strife*; Men do not strive with God, or doubt of his Mercy to forgive little Sins: For they think that will be done of course. But the great contest men have with God, is about his willingness to remit great Debts, scarlet Sins: Upon this account the strife is between God and doubting Sinners; therefore to bring this Contest to a period, God hath put himself to his Oath, and sworn that Christ should be a Priest for ever, to take away all strife between him and believing Sinners.

For whom is this strong consolation founded upon God's Oath? *v. 18.* For those that *fly for refuge*. Now the Cities of refuge were not appointed for ordinary Crimes, but for blood, to secure the Malefactor from the Avenger.

Shall I add further, God is best pleas'd with Christ when he makes intercession for the greatest Transgressors.

Suppose thou hadst been one of Christ's Murderers, and hadst given thy Vote against him; perhaps thou wouldst

wouldst have thought this a more Crim-  
son Sin than any thou art guilty of.

You know Christ pray'd for their  
pardon while he was upon the Cross.  
And God gives this as one reason why  
he would exalt him, *Isa. 53. 12. He*  
*shall divide him, &c.* why? because he  
pour'd out his Soul to death. What  
should he bear sin for, if God had  
no mind to pardon it? And be-  
cause he was *numbred among the trans-*  
*gressors*, which the Evangelist under-  
stands of his being crucified with  
Thieves, *Mark 15. 28.* And therefore  
his making intercession for Transgres-  
sors, must be understood of his Prayer  
upon the Cross. And if God did exalt  
him for this, would God be pleased with  
him, or would Christ answer the end of  
his Exaltation, if he did cease to make  
intercession for Sinners of the like  
stamp?

Tell God, that he sent Christ to bless  
you, *Acts 3. 26.* in converting you;  
and desire Christ to do his Office.

7thly. *Christ is intrusted by God to give*  
*out his Grace to great Sinners.*

7.

Christ



Christ is God's Lord Almoner for the dispensing Redemption, and the riches of his Grace. To whom? Not to the Righteous, they have no need of it; but to Sinners, and those that have the greatest necessity.

He would be an ill Steward, who when intrusted by his Lord to bestow his Alms upon the Poor, should overlook the most miserable, indigent, and necessitous Persons, when they crave it of him, and relieve those that had not so great and crying Wants.

Christ is a Priest for intents of the same nature as the Legal Typical Priests were. They were to have compassion, *Heb. 5. 2. μελεωπαθειν*, to measure out their compassion, to order the Sacrifice according to the nature of the sin of the Person that presented it. So is Christ by virtue of his Office to measure out his Grace according to the greatness of a man's necessity; as Manna was to be gathered according to every ones wants.

Well then, to conclude this Exhortation. Embolden thy self to draw near to Christ. 'Tis the Apostle's use  
he

he makes of all his foregoing Doctrine, *Heb. 10. 19. &c.* God requires not a heart without sin, but a heart without guile. Who needs more boldness than great Sinners? And the Apostle sets no limits to it. Let us, who have been as great Sinners as any, resolve to do as they in *Jeremy* did, *Jer. 3. 22.* They had both a Command, and a Promise. *Return*, there's the Command. *I will heal*, &c. there's the Promise. Presently, they reply, *We will come to thee*, &c. They seem to snatch the Promise out of God's mouth.

How will these quick and ready Converts rise up in judgment against thy slowness and dulness? Shall they do this upon one Promise; and when thou hast all the Promises in the Book of God repeated to thee, shall God hear no other answer but this, *We will not return*, or *we dare not come*, *we dare not believe thee*?

Did God give but one Promise to *Adam*, and did he embrace it, and live upon it all his life; (for we read of no more he had than that of the Seed of the Woman breaking the Serpent's head) and

and wilt thou not return, when thou hast so many Promises filling every page in the Scripture?

Hast thou not a world of Precedents? Did not God take up all his Saints from the Dunghil with all their Rags, and clothe them? Were any of them born Princes, and Sons of Heaven? Alas, every man at first sued for a Saviour in the right of a Sinner; and all pleaded in the Court of Heaven *in formâ pauperis*. Were they not Debtors, and could they do that which might make God cross out one of those Sums they ow'd him? Oh think not then thou canst dam up that torrent of Love that has flow'd so freely to the World for so many Ages. Tho' thy Disease be grievous, yet 'tis not irrecoverable, provided thou goest to the Physician. He can with a breath burn up thy Corruption, as soon as dissolve the Creation. Christ can turn the muddiest water into such Wine that can please the heart both of God and Man. As you have been Vessels of Sin, if you will be Vessels of Repentance, God will make you brimful of Mercy. Plead not therefore thy own  
unwor-

unworthiness. Man's unworthiness never yet hindered the flowing of God's kindness. 'Tis too weak a Bank to stop the current of God's favour. The greater thy unworthiness, the greater advantage has free Grace to manifest its uncontrollable Excellency. That Man dishonours God, that sets his Sin above God's Goodness, or his Unworthiness above God's Condescension. You cannot do God a greater pleasure, than to come to him to be made clean. When he reckons up thy Sin, 'tis not with an upbraiding, but a compassionate sigh, Jer. 13. 27. He longs for the time of thy returning; and minds thee of thy Sin, that thou mayst the sooner seek a remedy; and wonders thou wilt continue in such a filthy Condition so long.

USE 4. Caution.

1. Think not thy Sins are pardon'd, because they are not so great as those God has pardon'd in others.

This is *ad suam consolationem aliena numerare vitia* \*.

\* Hierony in Vol. 1. p. 114. c.

Consider



Consider, God cast off *Saul* for less Sins than *David* committed. Evil Angels were cast off for one Sin. A few small Sands may sink a Ship as well as a great Rock. Thy Sins may be pardoned though as great as others, but then you must have equal Qualifications with them. They had great Sins, so hast thou; but have you as great a hatred and loathing of Sin as they had?

2. *Let not this Doctrine encourage any person to go on in sin.*

If thou dost now suck such poison out of this Doctrine, and boast of that Name God proclaims *Exod. 34. 6, 7.* take the Cooler along with thee, and remember it is one part of his Name, *By no means to clear the guilty.* He never intended those Mercies for Sinners, as Sinners, but as penitent. Penitents, as such, are not guilty, because repentance is a moral revocation of a Sin, and always supposeth faith in Christ. There is forgiveness with God, *Psal. 130. 4.* but it is *that he may be feared*, not despised. God never intended mercy as a sanctuary to protect Sin.

1st. 'Tis *disingenuous* to do so. - Great Love requires great Duties, not great Sins. Freeness of Grace should make us increase holiness in a more chearful manner. What high ingratitude is it, to be inclin'd to sin, because God is inclin'd to pardon; to have a frozen heart to him, because he hath a melting heart to thee? What, to kick against him, because he has bowels; and to be wicked, because God is good? To turn Grace it self into wantonness. Is this to fear his Goodness? No, 'tis to trample on it, to make that which should excite thee to holiness, a Bawd to thy Lust, and God himself a Pandar to the Devil.

If thou dost thus slight the design of this Mercy, which thou canst never prize at too high a rate, 'tis certain thou never hadst the least taste of it. If thou hadst, thou couldst not sin so freely: For when Grace enters, it makes the Soul dead to sin, *Rom. 6. 1, 2.* The Apostle answers such a Consequence with a *God forbid.*

2dly. *'Tis foolish.*

Would any man be so simple, as to set his Houle on fire, because he has a great River running by his Door, from whence he may have water to quench it; or wound himself, because there is an excellent Plaister which has cur'd several?

3dly. *'Tis dangerous.*

If thou lovest the present time, thou art in danger to lose Eternity. There are many in Hell never sinn'd at such a presumptuous rate. He is merciful to the Penitent, but he will not be unfaithful to his Threatnings. If thou art willing to receive Grace, thou mayst have it, but upon God's Conditions. He will not pin it upon thy Sleeve whether thou wilt or no. This is to make that which is the favour of life, to become the favour of death unto thee.

See what an answer *Paul* gives to such an imagination, *Rom. 3. 8. Let us do evil, that good may come; whose damnation is just.* He takes a handful of Hell-fire and flings it in their faces.

Let

Let but the 29th of Deut. 18, 19.  
stare them in the face, and promise  
thy self peace in this Course if thou  
canst. *lest there should be among you  
a root that beareth gall and wormwood.*  
And it cometh to pass, when he heareth  
the words of this curse, that he bless  
himself in his heart, saying, *I shall have  
peace, though I walk in the imagination  
of mine heart.*

As his Goodness is great, which  
thou dost despise; so the Wrath will  
be the hotter, thou dost treasure up.  
Though great Sins are occasions of  
great Grace, yet Sin doth not necessi-  
tate Grace.

Who can tell, whether ever God  
would have shown mercy to Paul,  
had he done that against knowledge,  
which he did ignorantly?

Repentance must first be; see the  
order, *Acts 3. 19. Repent, and be con-  
verted, that your sins may be blotted out.*  
First, Repentance and Conversion,  
then Justification. This Grace is on-  
ly given to penitent Sinners. You  
know not whether you shall repent,  
but you may know, that if you do  
not



not repent, you shall be damn'd. As there is infinite Grace to pardon you, if you repent; so there is infinite Justice to punish you, if you do not repent. The Gospel binds us to our good behaviour as much as the Law.

F I N I S.

*Books Printed for Thomas Cockerill, at the Three Legs and Bible, over against Grocers Hall in the Poultry.*

**T**HE Works of Mr. Stephen Charnock on Various Divine Subjects. In Folio. 2 Vol.

Annotations on the Holy Bible. By Mr. Pool. In which the whole Sacred Text is inserted. The Fourth Edition will be published the 15th day of November next. Subscriptions are still taken at 50 s. in Quires, Seven paying for Six. Folio.

Sermons on Several Occasions. By John Conens, D.D. Published by the Bishop of Chichester.

A Preservative against Deism. By Nat. Taylor. Octavo.  
Geography Rectified. By Robert Mordin. With about 80 Maps. Quarto.

The Fourth and last Part of Mr. Rusworth's Historical Collections will be Published after Christmas. Subscriptions are taken at 35 s. per Book; Seven Books paying for Six.

Geography Anatomiz'd: Being an Exact Analysis of the whole Body of Modern Geography, after a New and Curious Method. By Pat. Gordon. M. A.

The History of England until the Conquest. By James Tyrrell, Esq; Folio.

The Second Volume of the History of England; both Ecclesiastical and Civil; beginning at William the Conqueror, and continued down to Edward the First; being the Reign of Eight Kings. By the same Hand; Is in the Press, and will be Published next Michaelmas Term.

